

CULTURE FOR VIOLENCE:  
THE STRATEGIC IMPACT OF THE OLMSTED SCHOLAR PROGRAM

BY  
MAJOR THOMAS A. WALSH

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## APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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STEPHEN CHIABOTTI      (Date)

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DERRICK FRAZIER      (Date)



## DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Thomas A. Walsh is a 2003 graduate of the University of Richmond, where he majored in leadership studies and political science. His 13-year career on active duty has taken him around the world, from Afghanistan to Chile. His most recent assignment was as an Olmsted Scholar in Ljubljana, Slovenia. There, Major Walsh attended the University of Ljubljana, earning a master's degree in defense studies. Major Walsh is a B-1B Weapon System Officer by training.



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Finally, I must thank my wife and my children. I am nothing without your love and support. With luck, Daddy will be reading a little less Clausewitz and a lot more Dr. Seuss in the days ahead.

## ABSTRACT

In 1959, Major General George Olmsted (USA, ret) founded the Olmsted Scholar Program. Olmsted's goal was to create a cadre of warrior-statesmen who were equipped, through cultural immersion, with language and cultural skills and a uniquely broad perspective. As the underwriter of the current world order, the United States faces an engagement imperative, one which requires its military to engage with partners and adversaries alike. In view of this, the Thesis examines the strategic value of the Olmsted Scholar Program. Building on Stephen Rosen's theory of military innovation, the Thesis shows that the military service branches value Olmsted Scholars, though to varying degrees, for their language and cultural skills. Interviews with retired and active senior military officers reveal that participation in the Olmsted Scholar Program imbues Scholars not only with language and cultural skills, but also with valuable cognitive skills. Though several areas require further research, the Thesis finds that the Olmsted Scholar Program provides strategic value to the US military and the United States.



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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

*Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.*

- Sun Tzu  
The Art of War

### Introduction

Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese military strategist, placed a premium on information. Victorious generals, he believed, were those who possessed superior information and used that information to defeat an enemy's strategy before the battle was even fought. The nature of the information one seeks about an enemy goes far beyond what contemporary strategists would term one's "order of battle," namely, the quantity and quality of one's personnel, weapons and supplies. Rather, Sun believed knowledge of the opponent's intent and strategy was paramount. The highest form of generalship, according to Sun, is to "balk the enemy's plans."<sup>1</sup> Thus, if one can glean the opponent's plans and ensure the secrecy of one's own plans, or, in other words, if one can "know the enemy and know oneself," then victory will never be in doubt.<sup>2</sup> Sun valued not just information on one's opponent, but also on one's allies. One should not enter into alliances, he cautioned, until one is acquainted with the designs of potential allies.<sup>3</sup> The critical factor that enables one to defeat enemies and keep beneficial allies "beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge." Information, whether in 510

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<sup>1</sup> Lionel Giles, M.A., trans., *Sun Tzu's The Art of War: The Ultimate Book of Ancient Chinese Military Strategy, Leadership and Politics* (Charleston, SC: Promotionwise, 2016), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Giles, *Sun Tzu*, 56.

<sup>3</sup> Giles, *Sun Tzu*, 40.

B.C. (when *The Art of War* was written) or in the twenty-first century A.D., was and remains analogous to power.

Military commanders often study their counterparts. American Army General George S. Patton widely read German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's writings on tactics to better understand the "Desert Fox's" perspective on war. Conversely, a German Air War Academy paper entitled *Invasionsgenerale* circulated in February 1944 contained brief, one paragraph summaries of senior American and British generals who were likely, in the German estimation, to command the invasion force.<sup>1</sup> Knowing one's enemy, as Sun Tzu implores, oftentimes translates into a quest for information about one's opposite numbers, that is, about the enemy's military and political leaders.

The great Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz also acknowledges the importance of "knowing" one's enemy. The aim of war is to defeat one's enemy. For Clausewitz, the surest way to defeat one's enemy is to strike at the enemy's center of gravity – the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."<sup>2</sup> An enemy's center of gravity is not necessarily (though it oftentimes is) its military forces. In countries subject to domestic strife, for example, Clausewitz writes that the center of gravity is the enemy capital. Among alliances, it lies on the community of interest, and in popular uprisings it is the personalities of the leaders and public opinion.<sup>3</sup> Yet, given the various features of an enemy's power that may constitute a center of gravity, it is exceedingly difficult to identify. Perhaps for this reason, Clausewitz suggests the defeat and destruction of an enemy's fighting force is the best place to start. Defeating an enemy's fighting force, while oftentimes necessary,

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<sup>1</sup> Henrik Bering, "The German View of Patton," The Hoover Institution, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.hoover.org/research/german-view-patton>

<sup>2</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 596.

<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 596.

may not be, by itself, sufficient for success. One must also consider the strength of the enemy's will, but this, Clausewitz cautions, is much more difficult to determine.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, Clausewitz recognized that intelligence – every sort of information about the enemy and his country – forms the basis of one's own plans and operations.<sup>5</sup> Clausewitz knew, however, that all information on one's enemy should be considered with a certain degree of skepticism. If we consider the actual basis of this information, Clausewitz wrote, "how unreliable and transient it is, we soon realize that war is a flimsy structure that can easily collapse and bury us in its ruins."<sup>6</sup> All we can ask of our leaders, in Clausewitz's view, is that they allow themselves to be guided by the laws of probability and possess a standard of judgement. As Robert Jervis points out, though, judgement itself is a matter of one's perception, which is often flawed. Just as Clausewitz acknowledged the fog of war – the severe limits on the ability of each side to know what the other's army (and even one's own army) is doing – Jervis draws attention to the fog of foreign policy-making.

It is terribly difficult, Jervis notes, "to tell what others are up to, to infer their predispositions, and to predict how they will behave."<sup>7</sup> This is because decision makers do and must employ short-cuts to rationality, often without being aware of the way they are doing so. These short-cuts often produce important kinds of systemic errors, many of which increase with conflict. In politics, for example, decision makers tend to ignore discrepant information or assimilate it to pre-existing beliefs.<sup>8</sup> This allows inaccurate images (i.e., perceptions) to perpetuate. Additionally, decision makers tend not to seek important information

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<sup>4</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 77.

<sup>5</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 117.

<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 117.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 113.

<sup>8</sup> Jervis, *Perception*, 172.

that is available and significant. For example, it was only after most of the Flanders offensive had been fought that Field Marshall Douglas Haig, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force in World War I, sent his chief of staff to review the front. Upon observing the incredible mud that had made movement, let alone fighting, so difficult, he asked, “Good God, did we really send men to fight in that?”<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Jervis notes, the war plans developed by both the British and American air forces in the interwar period were predicated on the effectiveness of strategic bombing, yet neither organization gathered much evidence, or evaluated the evidence they had, on the crucial question of whether the necessary targets could be located and accurately struck.<sup>10</sup> The systemic errors Jervis describes are part of a large and growing body of psychological research that help explain how difficult it is for the human mind to process information objectively.

Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking, Fast and Slow* describes the way the human mind processes information and identifies the cognitive minefields and traps to which it often succumbs. There are two metaphorical systems, Kahneman notes, that make up how the human mind thinks: System 1, which thinks fast and is intuitive and System 2, which monitors System 1 and thinks more slowly and effortfully. System 1 operates primarily through heuristics, or mental short cuts, to produce quick answers to the questions we face. Most of our thinking takes place in System 1, which helps us quickly resolve most of the situations we face daily. System 1, however, is vulnerable to bias. Some examples of common biases include confirmation bias (a deliberate search for confirming evidence) and the what-you-see-is-all-there-is (WYSIATI) bias (that is, failing to consider, or seek, information that is not easily accessible, as in Jervis’ example of British and American air

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<sup>9</sup> Jervis, *Perception*, 174.

<sup>10</sup> Jervis, *Perception*, 174.

strategists).<sup>11</sup> The best way to guard against biases, Kahneman offers, is to recognize the signs that one is in a “cognitive minefield,” slow down, and ask for reinforcement from System 2.<sup>12</sup> This is, of course, easier said than done. One way to guard against the “cognitive minefields” System 1 is prone to enter is to systematize thinking. Organizations do this all the time through, for example, the application of useful checklists and by creating a culture in which people watch out for one another’s biases. Thus, Kahneman writes, organizations are much better than individuals when it comes to avoiding errors.<sup>13</sup>

The problem with this organizational thinking, however, is that it overlooks the degree to which people perceive and process information through the prism of their cultures. LeBaron defines cultures as, “shared understandings and symbols that connect people to each other, providing them with unwritten messages about how to express themselves and how to make meaning in their lives.”<sup>14</sup> LeBaron points out that cultures exist within larger systems called worldviews, which give us ways to learn as well as logic for ordering what we know.<sup>15</sup> In other words, then, while biases are inherent in the way individuals process the information they receive, culture affects how we perceive information in the first place. A classic example of the way people from different cultures perceive the same information differently concerns the perception of time. Some have drawn parallels between a culture’s perception of time and the landscape. To Arab people, for instance, the vast and shifting nature of the desert landscape symbolizes oneness with God and a rhythm opposite to that of the Western world and its conception of time. A constant “everydayness” flows from this idea of

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 85.

<sup>12</sup> Kahneman, *Thinking*, 417.

<sup>13</sup> Kahneman, *Thinking*, 418.

<sup>14</sup> Michelle LeBaron, *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 10.

<sup>15</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 11.

time, in which it becomes, LeBaron notes, “less important to keep appointments precisely than to be in harmony with God.”<sup>16</sup> Another way of thinking of time, LeBaron highlights, is to consider behavioral norms associated with time boundaries. Consider the ways Mexicans, Americans, and Canadians leave parties. When Mexicans say goodbye, it is said, this signals the beginning of a leave-taking ritual that can last an hour.<sup>17</sup> Americans may leave quickly without saying good-bye at all, not wanting to interrupt the party. Canadians may say good-bye, but apologize for leaving. There are surely exceptions to these generalizations, but they demonstrate that our perceptions, even of time itself, are influenced by culture.

For the men and women of the US military, whom our nation calls on to engage with allies, partners, and adversaries from myriad cultures around the world, there is a critical imperative not just to understand different cultures, but to perceive decisions and actions from as many cultural perspectives as possible. America’s military leaders must strive to be aware of the ways our own cultural lenses shape our views and consider the ways others’ cultural lenses shape their views. This is critically important for effective communication and, more importantly, for achieving the political effects we seek either in or out of conflict. Or, put another way, if we aim to compel, coerce, or defeat our adversaries and at the same time support, strengthen, and reassure our partners, we must not merely consider their culture, but also (at least temporarily) see the world as they do. Only then can we truly “know” our enemies and our friends.

One such program offers US military officers the opportunity to do just that. The George and Carol Olmsted Foundation, through its Olmsted Scholar Program, offers to select US military officers annually

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<sup>16</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 80.

<sup>17</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 81.

the opportunity to learn a foreign language, pursue graduate studies at a foreign university, and to live and travel extensively abroad. Olmsted Scholars achieve a broad and deep understanding of the cultures in which they are immersed. The insight and skills Olmsted Scholars acquire while living in a foreign country and speaking a foreign language imbue them with a uniquely broad perspective and thus constitute a potentially valuable strategic resource for America's armed forces and the country. Consequently, this Thesis seeks to assess the strategic value of the Olmsted Scholar Program and its Scholars since the program's inception in 1960.

### **Research Questions and Methodology**

The central research question is: does the Olmsted Scholar Program have strategic value? To answer this question, the Thesis proposes the following three sub-questions:

- 1) What is the Olmsted Scholar Program and why is it relevant?
- 2) Do the military services recognize Olmsted Scholars as valuable?
- 3) How has the program impacted the development of senior US military officers?

These three questions form the conceptual pillars upon which answers to the primary research question are based. It behooves us, then, to explore some important components of each question.

#### *RQ1: What is the Olmsted Scholar Program and why is it relevant?*

The Department of Defense (DoD) Total Force numbers over three million military and civilian personnel. As an organization, it sends the largest number of Americans to foreign countries. The present and near-future security environment demands knowledge, skills, abilities, and

attitudes that can facilitate effective cross-cultural relationships. Military personnel must discern the meaning of the behavior of the actors involved in the global cultural milieu.<sup>18</sup> In recent years, culture as both a body of knowledge and set of skills has again become important to the DoD.<sup>19</sup> We are, in effect, witnessing a renewed focus on the human domain – the totality of the physical, cultural and social environments that influence human behavior – as an important element in the development and execution of strategy.

In addition to incorporating culture into the development of strategy, the US must remain engaged with the world. America's interests, and particularly its role underwriting the global rules-based liberal order, necessitate its engagement in world affairs. The price of greatness, Churchill said, is responsibility and the United States has a responsibility to remain engaged. Moreover, the US cannot insulate itself from world disorder. Globalization assures that the effects of corruption, instability, and conflict are felt globally. The United States' strategic security documents, such as its National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy acknowledge America's enormous stake in the global order. Furthermore, they commit the United States to working "by, with, and through" its allies and partners. Each Commander of the US Geographic Combatant Commands recognizes the need to strengthen America's relationships with its allies and partners. They recognize, in effect, the engagement imperative facing the United States.

Olmsted Scholars spend as much as three years immersed in the cultural and linguistic milieu of foreign nations. They live and study in countries that could seek to upset the international order, such as Russia and China, and in countries whom the US considers among its

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Greene Sands and Allison Greene-Sands, eds., *Cross-Cultural Competence for a Twenty-First-Century Military: Culture, the Flipside of COIN* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Greene Sands, *Cross-Cultural Competence*, 10.

stauncest allies, such as France and Germany. Due to their educational and experiential pedigree, Scholars possess a unique perspective on the “human domain” of America’s opponents and partners. The strategic relevance of the Olmsted Scholar Program, therefore, stems from the United States’ engagement imperative. Chapter 2 and 3 consider the nature of 21st-century conflict and the Olmsted Scholar Program, respectively.

*RQ2: Do the military services recognize Olmsted Scholars as valuable?*

As early as 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was aware that the DoD suffered from a critical shortfall of personnel skilled in language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC). The publishing of the 2005 *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, in a sense, ushered in a sea change at the Department of Defense. It specifically identified language capability and regional expertise as strategic assets in the Global War on Terrorism. A series of subsequent DoD Directives and Instructions charged the military services with greatly expanding the number of its LREC-enabled personnel. Moreover, these instructions directed the services to ensure personnel with LREC skills were managed as strategic assets, paying careful attention to the recruiting, retention, and promotion of these individuals. This initiative even drew attention from the House Armed Service Committee’s Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in 2008 and 2010 to ensure the military services were making progress.

The DoD’s emphasis on LREC since 2005 is, in some respects, emblematic of the way military organizations innovate. Stephen Rosen contends that military organizations innovate as the result of an ideological struggle, in which a “new theory of victory” rises.<sup>20</sup> The way

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<sup>20</sup> Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 20.

the new theory of victory promulgates throughout the organization is via the promotion of officers who subscribe to or exemplify the new theory. By translating the new theory of victory into everyday tasks and critical missions, a new criteria forms against which the organization measures the effectiveness of its officers.

If Rosen's conception of military organizational change is correct, then one could expect Olmsted Scholars to promote competitively against their non-Olmsted peers because, by nature of their language and cultural skills, they better exemplify the new theory of victory. There are some problems, though, in examining promotion data. First, promotion data is difficult to obtain. This author could obtain only USAF promotion data on Olmsted Scholars relative to historical Air Force averages. Furthermore, it is difficult to attribute an officer's selection for promotion to only one factor. A whole host of factors inform a promotion board's decision to select an officer for promotion. Whether one was selected for promotion because of one's status as an Olmsted Scholar or whether one was selected for promotion because of other factors is, is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, if a correlation can be shown between being an Olmsted Scholar and promotion, then this could be considered as evidence in support of Rosen's contention. Chapter 4 examines this.

*RQ3: How has the program impacted the development of senior US military officers?*

The Olmsted Scholar Program claims numerous senior leaders among its alumni.<sup>21</sup> General John Abizaid (USA, ret), former commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), Admiral Carl Trost (USN, ret), former Chief of Naval Operations, and General Lee Butler (USAF, ret), Commander of US Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) were Olmsted Scholars in Amman, Jordan (1978-1980), Freiburg, Germany, and Paris,

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<sup>21</sup> This paper defines military "senior leaders" as those officers who have attained Flag or General officer rank (i.e., O-7 and above).

France (1965-1967), respectively. Each of these senior leaders attests to the immeasurable value of their experiences as Olmsted Scholars.

Two things stand out from these officers' reflections on their Olmsted Scholar tours: the value of their expanded world view, which they attained through cultural immersion, and the unique maturation they experienced as military officers confronting and solving problems in a foreign land in a foreign language. General Abizaid notes, for example, that "the opportunity to be an Olmsted Scholar and experience the Middle East was invaluable for my personal growth, my professional military career and my time as the commander of US Central Command."<sup>22</sup> General Butler voiced similarly high praise for his experience as an Olmsted Scholar. He credited his expanded world view, formed at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, as essential to his later roles in crafting a revised national military strategy and reformulation of nuclear policy and posture in the aftermath of the Cold War.<sup>23</sup> Admiral Trost notes that his experiences as a Scholar were extremely useful as he dealt in the political-military environment with foreign military and civilian officials as well as America's own diplomatic corps. The Olmsted experience, he writes, "was not only personally rewarding, it served as the basic training for my subsequent career."<sup>24</sup>

By drawing on testimonials such as these and first-hand interviews with four Scholars who have reached Flag/General officer rank, the thesis will demonstrate not only that Olmsted Scholars hold their experiences abroad as foundational to their development as officers but also that it enabled them to better perform their roles and responsibilities as senior leaders. Through their experience as Olmsted Scholars, these senior leaders gained what LeBaron calls *cultural fluency*.

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<sup>22</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, *General Olmsted and His Scholars* (Falls Church, VA: The George and Carol Olmsted Foundation, 2009), iv.

<sup>23</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *General Olmsted*, iv.

<sup>24</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *General Olmsted*, iv.

Developing cultural fluency, LeBaron writes, “is to experience from as many different angles as possible the multiple levels of meaning, identity and communication in cultures.”<sup>25</sup> The cultural fluency senior leaders attain allows them to employ the “Platinum Rule.” If the Golden Rule calls us to do unto others what we would have them do unto us, the Platinum Rule asks us to do unto others as they would have us do unto them – in effect, it challenges us to look at the world from the perspective of others, rather than assuming our perspectives are shared.<sup>26</sup> This is just one example of how the Olmsted Scholar Program has impacted the development of senior US military leaders. Chapter 5 addresses this question in detail.

### **Definitions, Limitations, and Assumptions**

The Thesis argues that the Olmsted Scholar Program has strategic value for the United States. By providing language fluency and cultural immersion to a select group of promising military officers, the Olmsted Scholar Program has imbued generations of American senior military leaders with a multi-faceted worldview and high level of cultural fluency. For the US to influence and shape the world as it desires, it must craft policy and strategy that account for others’ perspectives. It must make the human domain central to the development of strategy.

It behooves us here to define several terms as they have been introduced. Culture, per LeBaron, is the shared understanding and symbols that connect people to each other, providing them with unwritten messages about how to express themselves and how to make meaning in their lives.<sup>27</sup> Culture ties people together through shared identities, histories, starting points and currencies. Starting points are those places from which it seems natural to begin, such as how one sees

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<sup>25</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 40.

<sup>26</sup> Le Baron, *Bridging*, 74.

<sup>27</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 10.

oneself. Assumptions that starting points are shared often get in the way of mutual understanding.<sup>28</sup> Currencies, in the context of culture, are ways of being and acting in the world. An individual-oriented person, for example, values independence, individual accomplishment and straightforwardness whereas a group-oriented person values interdependence, group achievement and face-saving.<sup>29</sup>

Cultures exist within larger systems called worldviews, which shape and inform our identities and meaning-making. They give us ways to learn as well as logic for ordering knowledge.<sup>30</sup> As we become more aware of cultural starting points and currencies playing out in relationships, we see others more clearly and have a wider range of choices for behavior and interpretation. This is what LeBaron calls cultural fluency. As with linguistic fluency, cultural fluency is ultimately about sense-making and recognizing innately (just as one uses their primary language), the many levels of meaning contained in communication. Since all communication is influenced by culture, cultural fluency is critical to effective communication.

The meaning of communication is determined largely by how it is interpreted by an audience. A strategic audience is a population of people whose views and actions are relevant to the strategy one is trying to implement. This can include the enemy's population, one's own population, the population of allies and partners, etc. To persuade an audience in accordance with one's policy aims, Simpson states, "one needs to think in terms of how they will interpret the action."<sup>31</sup> The utility of force in effecting persuasion is inherently limited, though, because, as a vehicle for sending a message, force can be interpreted differently by different groups. The proliferation of strategic audiences

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<sup>28</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> LeBaron, *Bridging*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73.

beyond the enemy means that force no longer has a clear target. One cannot ‘force’ an outcome on a strategic audience that is not the enemy.<sup>32</sup> In order to persuade strategic audiences beyond one’s enemy, one must formulate, implement and be guided by one’s strategic narrative. A strategic narrative is one’s explanation of actions. It can usually be found chronologically, before a conflict starts as the explanation for participation in or initiation of the conflict. It can also operate as the explanation of actions during and after the conflict. A strategic narrative, Simpson writes, effectively proposes to its audience a structure through which to interpret actions.<sup>33</sup> It should be adjusted to one’s audience.

The problem with strategic narratives, though, comes when they are ‘pitched’ so differently to different audiences that the narrative loses credibility because its versions are inconsistent. A convincing narrative must be consistent in words and action across the globe, Simpson notes. An important step toward re-establishing credible influence and applying it effectively is to close the “say-do” gap. Porter and Mykleby point out that the West, and Americans in particular, tend to label or “bin” individuals, groups, organizations and ideas.<sup>34</sup> In complex systems, however, such as our increasingly interconnected world, adaptation and variation often lead to unintended consequences and overly simplify complexity. For example, labelling (“binning”) Islamist radicals as “terrorists” or “jihadis,” Porter and Mykleby claim, has contributed to the misperception that all Muslims are thought of as terrorists and that those who pervert Islam into hateful ideology are motivated by religious struggle rather than being seen as apostates.<sup>35</sup> This has resulted in the

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<sup>32</sup> Simpson, *War from the Ground Up*, 84.

<sup>33</sup> Simpson, *War from the Ground Up*, 181.

<sup>34</sup> Wayne Porter and Mark Mykleby, *A National Strategic Narrative* (Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2011), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Porter and Mykleby, *Strategic Narrative*, 10.

alienation of large elements of the Muslim world and has frustrated efforts to marginalize extremism.

A strategic narrative, then, must not only be adjusted to one's audience, but it must be sufficiently consistent to remain credible. It must account for the complex perspectives of global audiences. But it also must serve as an instrument to align and unify word and deed. In this way, a strategic narrative can help to achieve unity of effort, to give coherent expression to America's will. For the US to be perceived as credible, it must understand the interpretative structure of its strategic audiences. It must therefore, as we recall from LeBaron, centrally locate culture, and the human domain of which it is a part, within its development of strategy.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Engagement Imperative**

#### **The Nature of 21st Century Conflict**

*You're asking me to understand the interrelationships and interconnections between ward bosses and district chiefs and the tribes of Chicago like the tribes of Kandahar. And I've got to tell you, I've lived in Chicago for a long time, and I don't understand that.*

- President Barack Obama

President Obama's quote to General Stanley McChrystal about the incredible complexity of Afghan politics is indicative of the nature of twenty-first century conflict. The general trend of contemporary conflict is a movement away from situations in which the armed forces set military conditions for a political solution. According to Simpson, "in many armed conflicts, while the activity of armed forces often remains crucial to achieving a political result, military activity is not clearly distinguishable from political activity."<sup>1</sup> Said another way, while military force is necessary to set the conditions for a political solution, force itself is insufficient to generate the political outcome one seeks. The outcomes of contemporary conflicts are often better understood as continual evolutions of how power is configured, in relation to various audiences, and how that configuration is adjusted through the application of both violent and non-violent means.<sup>2</sup> This is not to suggest that there are not, or will not in the future be, conflicts in which the military outcome effectively forces a political result. Rather, the point is that the outcomes of many contemporary conflicts are not exclusively defined against an

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<sup>1</sup> Simpson, *War From the Ground Up*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Simpson, *War*, 2.

enemy. The outcomes of contemporary conflicts tend to be defined with audiences other than the enemy.

Consider, for example, the situation in Afghanistan. The definition of the outcome of the conflict in Afghanistan for the international coalition extends, according to Simpson, into the perceptions of audiences well beyond the insurgency. The Afghan people are a central audience, but beyond Afghanistan, the perception of the conflict's outcome within the Muslim world, and especially Pakistan, is a key factor.<sup>3</sup> Beyond the Muslim world, the outcome in Afghanistan has global implications, especially for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in terms of its capability and credibility in the eyes of Russia and China. Strategy, therefore, must consider the way in which various audiences are likely to interpret the political effects of military actions. The control of political space, as a result, becomes as important, if not more important than the control of physical space. And, as Obama's quote indicates, the conflict environment itself is characterized by growing complexity – it is not merely polarized, but kaleidoscopic.

Ultimately, the more kaleidoscopic, or fragmented, a political environment, the more actions are interpreted individually in directly political terms rather than as part of the military balance in the scale of a conflict's outcome. In *New and Old Wars*, Mary Kaldor points out that in the past twenty years the political environments of conflicts tend to fragment along conceptions of identity. The goals of new wars, she writes, "are about identity politics in contrast to the geo-political or ideological goals of earlier wars."<sup>4</sup> Whereas in traditional, state-centric wars, Kaldor writes, the objective is the capture of territory by military means, the objective of new wars is to mobilize extremist politics based on fear and hatred to acquire power. Leaving aside Kaldor's oversight that the

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<sup>3</sup> Simpson, *War*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012), Chapter 4.

objective of state-centric wars can involve much more than merely capturing territory, her point is that in contemporary conflict, i.e., “new wars,” the political context fragments along conceptions of identity, be they ethnic, religious, or linguistic in nature.

At the nexus of violence, identity, and politics, Stathis Kalyvas expounds on the relationship between fragmented politics and violence in the context of civil war. Rather than just politicizing private life, Kalyvas writes,

civil war works the other way around: it privatizes politics. Civil war often transforms local and personal grievances into lethal violence; once it occurs, this violence becomes endowed with political meaning that may be quickly naturalized into new and enduring identities.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas Kaldor attributes violence to cleavages along political lines based on identity, Kalyvas, on the other hand, posits that violence, which can stem from purely personal interests, can be “naturalized” into new and enduring identities. Each recognizes, though, the central role that “identity” plays in the animation and interpretation of violence. This recognition dovetails with Simpson’s conception of twenty-first century combat as politics. Recall that culture affects one’s sense of identity, i.e., how one sees oneself, through its influence on starting points. It is therefore essential to incorporate culture into the development of strategy.

Another important trend of twenty-first century conflict is the increasing interconnectedness of people through the proliferation of telecommunications technology. Recalling the political and technological context that contributed to the French *Levee en Masse*, Audrey Kuth Cronin contends globalization and the increasing interconnectedness of people through technology are producing a new *Levee en Masse* in the

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<sup>5</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 389

twenty-first century. Cronin writes that a state's connection with the mass mobilized army was "the key element in the firm establishment of the modern secular state within the West, and a watershed in the evolution of modern war."<sup>6</sup> Whereas many recall the literal meaning of the *levee en masse* as referring to mass conscription, few recall its second meaning, which refers to the *levee* as uprising. To drive young men to the army and induce the population to support the war effort, the means of communication were deregulated and democratized. This produced a dramatic expansion in the means of communication, which reached and radicalized the masses.

What is unfolding, Cronin asserts, "is a widespread egalitarian development more related to the explosion of publications and printing that catalyzed and consolidated the French Revolution than it is to the high-tech military advances of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>7</sup> During the Revolution, for example, the press developed in an institutional vacuum, without copyright rules on publishing or journalism, laws on libel, or any other mechanism that would serve to verify the accuracy of printed information. For good or ill, Cronin writes, the current state of cyberspace is roughly comparable to the era of expansion in publishing that followed the deregulation of the French press.<sup>8</sup> As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in popular access to information, and determinations of that information's veracity are made at an individual level. Questions such as "Who has legitimacy," "What is truly authoritative," and "Whom can I trust" do not lend themselves to ready answers. In the creative anarchy that characterizes the Internet, narratives compete for influence and are used to recruit, convince, and motivate individuals to acts of violence in the physical world. The West,

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<sup>6</sup> Audrey Kuth Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization: The New Levee en Masse," *Parameters* 36, no. 2, (Summer 2006), 77.

<sup>7</sup> Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization," 81.

<sup>8</sup> Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization," 82.

Cronin concludes, has lost control of the narrative, and in so doing, has lost a powerful means of altering the way people fight and for what they decide to fight.<sup>9</sup>

The DoD's *Joint Operating Environment 2035* (JOE 2035), like Cronin, recognizes the way information technology is affecting states and societies. The future security environment will feature large areas of the globe where states struggle to maintain a monopoly on violence, and individual identities are no longer based exclusively on a sense of physical location.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the US will confront identity networks that are constructed in cyberspace, reach transregionally across national boundaries, and will be capable of challenging state authority or the institutional, social, and cultural structures that underpin a peaceful, orderly world. Military competition in this context must focus on the ability of identity networks to use ideas to manipulate the mental processes, emotions, feelings, perceptions, behaviors, and decisions of their intended targets. Reflecting Cronin's alarm that loss of control of the narrative places the West at a strategic disadvantage, the JOE 2035 recognizes that the need to develop new narratives and novel depolarization techniques will become more critical in the years ahead.<sup>11</sup>

The Joint Force of the future must be prepared to conduct global "influence" missions to understand and blunt an adversary's use of ideas, images, and violence designed to manipulate the US and its allies. According to JOE 2035, such missions:

must align information operations and the discrete application of lethal strikes and protective defense efforts against adversary networks to reinforce broader national counter-narratives designed to protect, strengthen, and promote free and open societies.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization," 86.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Defense (DoD), *The Joint Operating Environment-2035: The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World* (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, July 2016), 10.

<sup>11</sup> DoD, *JOE 2035*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> DoD, *JOE 2035*, 42.

Or, as Simpson would put it, the US must align its actions to its words. It must recognize the power of narratives to counter the networks that threaten American and allied interests and employ the full spectrum of its resources in a manner that lends credibility to its own narrative. This requires that the US not to isolate itself from the increasingly complex world it faces, but rather to engage it. As the world's "indispensable nation" it faces an engagement imperative.

### **The Engagement Imperative**

*The price of greatness is responsibility...one cannot rise to be in many ways the leading community in the civilized world without being involved in its problems, without being convulsed by its agonies and inspired by its causes.*

- Winston Churchill

American interests, and particularly its role underwriting the global rules-based liberal order, have often necessitated its engagement in world affairs. Yet America's mood towards isolationism or engagement with the world has ebbed and flowed since its founding. In George Washington's farewell address to the nation, he warned Americans to avoid permanent alliances with foreign nations and instead to rely on temporary alliances for emergencies.<sup>13</sup> Washington's remarks were a source of inspiration for American isolationist movements, and his advice against joining a permanent alliance was followed for more than a century and a half.

During the 1930s, the combination of the great depression and the tragic memories of World War I bolstered American isolationism. Once in office, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt saw a necessity for the US to participate more actively in world affairs, but strong isolationist

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of State (DoS), "Washington's Farewell Address, 1796," Office of the Historian, accessed 3 March 2017, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1784-1800/washington-farewell>

sentiment in Congress limited his initiatives. In 1935 and again in 1937, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts, which prohibited the export of “arms, ammunition, and implements of war” from the US to foreign nations at war and prohibited Americans from extending any loans to belligerent nations.<sup>14</sup> Even following Germany’s occupation of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939, Congress refused to permit the sale of American arms to foreign countries. As the war in Europe increasingly impacted American interests, Congress eased prohibitions on American military aid to foreign nations. In November 1939, Congress lifted the ban on arms exports. In October 1941, Congress authorized the arming of American merchant ships and in November, authorized American merchant ships to enter “combat zones.”<sup>15</sup> The American isolationism movement reached its nadir following Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

Today, the tide of isolationism may again be rising in America. During the 2016 presidential campaign, then-candidate Donald Trump articulated an “America First” vision of foreign policy, reminiscent of the isolationism that dominated American public opinion in the 1930s. In a foreign-policy speech in May 2016, Trump was highly critical of American engagement in the world, claiming that under his administration, the US government would “no longer surrender this country or its people to the false song of globalism.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, candidate Trump questioned America’s involvement with NATO, saying the US role may need to be significantly diminished in the coming years.<sup>17</sup> As President, Trump has

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<sup>14</sup> DoS, “The Neutrality Acts, 1930s,” Office of the Historian, accessed on 3 March 2017, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/neutrality-acts>

<sup>15</sup> DoS, “The Neutrality Acts, 1930s”

<sup>16</sup> Michael Hirsh, “Why George Washington Would Have Agreed With Donald Trump,” *Politico Magazine*, 5 May 2016, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/05/founding-fathers-2016-donald-trump-america-first-foreign-policy-isolationist-213873>

<sup>17</sup> Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, “Trump Questions Need For NATO, Outlines Noninterventionist Foreign Policy,” *The Washington Post*, 21 March 2016,

withdrawn the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (an American-sponsored regional trade initiative) and has called on America's security partners, such as Japan, South Korea and NATO to contribute more toward their own defense.

President Trump has moderated, however, his isolationist tone with respect to US security partnerships since coming to office. In February 2017, Trump sent Secretary of Defense James Mattis on his first overseas trip to Japan, ostensibly to reassure Japan and South Korea of America's commitment to their security in the face of North Korean aggression.<sup>18</sup> Not long after Secretary Mattis' trip to Japan, Vice President Mike Pence made his first overseas trip to Germany, where he addressed NATO allies at the Munich Security Conference. Bearing what he said was a direct message from President Trump, Pence said "the United States of America strongly supports NATO and will be unwavering in our commitment to this trans-Atlantic alliance."<sup>19</sup> In a sense, while Secretary Mattis' and Vice President Pence's trips do not represent a repudiation of Trump's campaign rhetoric, they do reflect an acknowledgement by the White House that America's security interests are inextricably tied to the security of US allies and, perhaps more broadly, to the stability of the global liberal order.

What may be emerging in the Trump administration, then, is a begrudging realization that the relationships and institutions that constitute the global liberal order, an order which has benefited America for the past seventy years, require continued American investment and

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/03/21/donald-trump-reveals-foreign-policy-team-in-meeting-with-the-washington-post>

<sup>18</sup> Rachel Martin, "General Mattis Makes His First Foreign Trip as Defense Secretary," *National Public Radio*, 2 February 2017, [www.npr.org/2017/02/02/512998392/gen-mattis-makes-first-foreign-trip-as-defense-secretary](http://www.npr.org/2017/02/02/512998392/gen-mattis-makes-first-foreign-trip-as-defense-secretary)

<sup>19</sup> Steven Erlanger and Alison Smale, "In Munich, Pence Says U.S. Commitment to NATO is 'Unwavering,'" *The New York Times*, 18 February 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/18/world/europe/pence-munich-speech-nato-merkel.html>

leadership. In *The Big Stick*, Elliot Cohen argues that American foreign policy requires commitments to deploy and use force overseas. Cohen describes the circumstances in which the US reluctantly became a guarantor of global stability:

In the wake of the desolation of Europe and Asia resulting from World War II, the rise of communism, a virulent ideology hostile to American principles, and the fatal weakening of its strongest ally, Great Britain, the United States was impelled to take on the duty that Churchill flung before it – the accretion of massive military power not to defend merely American prerogatives or interests, but rather to maintain global order.<sup>20</sup>

The consensus behind playing the dominant role in the world remained intact beyond the end of the Cold War and well into the 1990s. In the first years of the twenty-first century, however, some began to question America's role as global sheriff. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the US engaged in three grueling wars: in Afghanistan against the Taliban; in Iraq against the regime of Saddam Hussein, and then against a variety of Islamic guerilla and terrorist movements; and globally, against affiliates of and successors to al Qaeda.<sup>21</sup> In view of these engagements, it should come as no surprise that Americans desire to withdraw from the world. After all, how has the US benefited from over fifteen years of war?

The history, though, of America's twenty-first century involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has not yet been written. Looking back to the post-World War II era, Cohen points out that despite wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Balkans, the Great Lakes region of Africa and the Middle East, the world did not experience another general conflagration like the two world wars.<sup>22</sup> This was due, in part, to the competition between the superpowers (that froze large conflicts),

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<sup>20</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power & the Necessity of Military Force* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2016), 4.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 23.

statesmanship, and luck. This period of peace, if it can be called that, has precedents in history, such as the period of European peace between 1815-and 1914, which was marred only by brief, bloody conflicts such as the Crimean War and the wars of German unification.<sup>23</sup> But just as that century-long peace ended in global conflict, there is no reason to suspect that the present peace may also endure. The world remains a dangerous place, as conflicts in Ukraine, Iraq, and Syria demonstrate.

The United States cannot insulate itself from world disorder. Its economic and security interests are too integrated with the current world order. That order is one which celebrates individual liberties, such as free speech and the right to possess property, and the rule of law. Globalization means, though, that no matter how much the US desires it, corruption and coercion will visit as regimes of various types resort to whatever means they wish, including bribery and intimidation, to buy or force the silence or compliance of individual American companies, news sources, and NGOs. In a globalized world, Cohen asserts, corruption does not stay abroad – in various and subtle ways, it leaches back into the US.<sup>24</sup> American military might cannot prevent corruption, in all its insidious forms, from affecting the US, but it can help set international rules of the road that protect itself and the current global order. The American stake in the global order is enormous. If it does not take the lead in maintaining it, Cohen warns, “its own prosperity and freedoms will suffer as well.”<sup>25</sup>

The United States’ portfolio of national security documents echo Cohen’s conviction that it must remain engaged with the world. President Obama opened his 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) with an acknowledgement that America must lead. Strong and sustained American leadership, he said, “is essential to a rules-based international

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<sup>23</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 28.

order that promotes global security and prosperity as well as the dignity and human rights of all peoples.”<sup>26</sup> The question facing America, in President Obama’s view, was not *whether* the US should lead, but how. While the US is demonstrating it will act unilaterally against threats to its core interests, it recognizes it is stronger when it mobilizes collective action. Thus, not only is there a need for the United States to help set the rules of the road, in Cohens words, but there is also a need for the US to continue to work closely with its partners and allies in doing so.

This realization – that the US is stronger when it works together with others – permeates America’s National Military Strategy (NMS). Then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey wrote in his foreword to the NMS that success will depend on how the US military supports other instruments of power and enables America’s network of allies and partners.<sup>27</sup> Strengthening the United States’ global network of allies and partners is central to America’s efforts not only to deter, deny, and defeat potential state adversaries, but also to disrupt, degrade, and defeat violent extremist organizations. Indeed, the US considers the security of its allies and partners to be an enduring national interest, third only to the security of the United States itself and its citizens.<sup>28</sup> In terms of force planning and posture, NMS states the US requires a military “with the capacity, capability and readiness to simultaneously defend the homeland; conduct sustained distributed counterterrorist operations, and, in multiple regions, deter aggression and assure allies through forward presence and engagement.”<sup>29</sup>

Each year, various organizations throughout the US military produce and disseminate posture statements. These documents are

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<sup>26</sup> President Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2015), i.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2015), i.

<sup>28</sup> DoD, *NMS*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> DoD, *NMS*, 6.

unclassified summaries of the relevant organization's roles, missions, accomplishments, plans and programs. Posture statements are designed to be hierarchically reinforcing and to present a coherent DoD perspective about its role in guaranteeing US security to Congress. Generally, posture statements satisfy the Congressionally mandated requirements to report on the status and readiness of America's armed forces contained within each National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Each of the most recent posture statements of America's five Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) underscored the need for America's military forces to remain engaged with US partners and allies. The posture statements of the GCCs are instructive because they acknowledge America's engagement imperative.

In the 2016 NORTHCOM Posture Statement, Admiral William E. Gortney (Commander USNORTHCOM) describes a complex security environment confronting the US and Canada. The spectrum of threats ranges from traditional nation-state military capabilities to individuals with access to increasingly destructive technologies.<sup>30</sup> To mitigate these threats, NORTHCOM identifies seven Lines of Operation, which Admiral Gortney sees as his command's primary functions. Missile defense is a role NORTHCOM is aggressively pursuing as part of its role in homeland defense (NORTHCOM's first priority). Gortney believes that homeland defense is fundamentally an "away game," and missile-defense exemplifies this. In order to provide sufficient decision time, Gortney advocates developing missile defense systems that intercept missiles in early phases of flight, such as the boost phase. This capability requires, though, the deployment of advanced tracking radars *outside* of US territory. Gortney points to a recent agreement with the government of Japan to field an AN/TYP-2 radar (part of America's missile defense

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<sup>30</sup> William E. Gortney, *Statement of Admiral William E. Gortney, United States Navy, Commander United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 3.

system).<sup>31</sup> Deployments such as this, Gortney contends, dramatically improve America’s ability to “defend forward.”

Defending forward requires the collaboration and cooperation of American allies and foreign partners, which itself requires the US to strive to maintain robust international relationships. Gortney recognizes that US allies and partner nations actively contribute to the cooperative defense of North America. He writes, “strong and reliable regional partnerships...are critical for us to protect our shared values and ways of life and defend our nations in depth.”<sup>32</sup> The United States’ security partnership with Canada, for example, forms the bedrock of North American defense and is embodied in the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). For over 57 years, Gortney writes, NORAD has been a model for international cooperation and a symbol of trust and confidence between the United States and Canada.”<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, NORTHCOM has also taken steps to bolster its security relationships with its counterparts in Mexico. Through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), NORTHCOM continues to provide training and equipment to Mexico’s land and naval forces to build its security capacity. Engagements such as these demonstrate Admiral Gortney’s conviction that US allies and partners are critical to US security.

Bolstering the United States’ international relationships and “defending forward” are high priorities in the posture statements of the other GCCs as well. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2016, for example, Admiral Kurt Tidd, Commander of United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) echoed Admiral Gortney’s need to remain engaged. This is especially important now because some of America’s competitors are showing an increased interest in replacing the US as the security partner of choice for countries in

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<sup>31</sup> Gortney, *Statement*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Gortney, *Statement*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Gortney, *Statement*, 23.

South America.<sup>34</sup> In the past year alone, Admiral Tidd notes, Russia has significantly increased its involvement in the region with activities ranging from military-security engagements to regular broadcasts of anti-American propaganda through Russian state-owned media organizations like Sputnik Mundo. China also has expanded its military engagement in the region with offers of training in Beijing, high-level visits, donations of equipment, and naval-diplomacy efforts.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the threats emanating from the region, such as transnational organized crime (TOC), ineffective governance, and natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and epidemics) all warrant continued engagement, Admiral Tidd claims. For reasons such as these, SOUTHCOM remains committed to regional engagement and building the capacity of America's regional partners. This is, as Admiral Tidd says, the "cornerstone" of everything SOUTHCOM does.<sup>36</sup>

Many of America's most capable and willing allies are in Europe. General Phillip Breedlove, Commander of US European Command (EUCOM) presented his Command's posture statement in February 2016. On any given day, General Breedlove notes, EUCOM forces are engaged in a variety of activities to deter Russia and counter the threats posed to America's allies and partners. Among these activities, the imperative to train and collaborate with NATO allies and partners to maintain interoperability and to assure them of America's commitment to collective defense are prominent. Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE, for example, is an enduring mission in which US Army and Naval forces regularly deploy to and from the EUCOM area. These deployments are on top of US forces organic to EUCOM. ATLANTIC RESOLVE, Breedlove writes, supports EUCOM's mission to assure and defend NATO, enhance

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<sup>34</sup> Kurt W. Tidd, *Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, Commander United States Southern Command* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Tidd, *Statement*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Tidd, *Statement*, 14.

US allies' and partners' abilities to provide their own security, and deter further Russian aggression.<sup>37</sup> From having fought two world wars in part on European soil, to the current instability in the east and south of Europe, Breedlove concludes, the United States "must remain indisputably invested in a region that is inexorably tied to [its] own freedom, security and prosperity."<sup>38</sup>

In Africa as well, General David Rodriguez (Commander of United States' Africa Command (AFRICOM)) recognizes engagement as a strategic imperative. The stability of African states is an enduring interest for the US; and their importance will continue to increase as African economies, population, and influence grow. In 2010, the UN estimated Africa's population at 1 billion people, and predicted growth to 1.6 billion people by 2030.<sup>39</sup> Threats to American security from Africa stem primarily from the potential for spreading violence and instability. Africans' fear and distrust of predatory governments or security forces and limited opportunities for democratic participation and employment combine with demographic pressures (such as urbanization and a youth bulge) to place tremendous stress on already-weak governing institutions. Instability in Libya, Nigeria, and Somalia exemplify this trend. Libya's insecurity, General Rodriguez highlights, "combined with porous land and maritime borders, has negative consequences for its people, its neighbors, Europe's southern flank, and our peace and security objectives in Africa and the Middle East."<sup>40</sup> To neutralize threats such as these, AFRICOM's strategy is centered on building the defense capability and capacity of America's African partners. In Nigeria, for example, AFRICOM has provided counter-IED, ISR, and military advisors

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<sup>37</sup> Philip Breedlove, *Posture Statement of Philip Breedlove, Commander US European Command* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 13.

<sup>38</sup> Breedlove, *Statement*, 26.

<sup>39</sup> David M. Rodriguez, *Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, Commander United States Africa Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Rodriguez, *Statement*, 6.

to support the Nigerian military’s efforts against Boko Haram, a terrorist group.<sup>41</sup> Though Africa presents a challenging and complex security environment, the Command’s approach “capitalizes on regional cooperation and close coordination with our [America’s] African and international partners.”<sup>42</sup>

Over the past twenty-five years, events that have taken place within US Central Command’s (CENTCOM) area of responsibility have been at the forefront of the United States’ foreign policy and military activity. The US military has been heavily involved in this region of the world since 1991. The breadth and depth of our America’s engagement there continues to this day. The posture statement of General Joseph Votel (CENTCOM’s current commander) is centered on continued engagement with America’s regional allies and partners. To have an accurate understanding of the situation in the region and to remain capable of effectively countering all threats, Vogel emphasizes the US “must take care to build and cultivate strong relationships...to be responsive to our partners and always listen and strive to understand their points of view and priorities.”<sup>43</sup> Strong relationships based on shared values create greater cohesion, Votel claims, and enhance the effectiveness of available resources and capabilities. The Iraqi Security Forces’ efforts to counter ISIS and the United Arab Emirates-led operations in Yemen against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula typify CENTCOM’s strategic approach of working “by, with, and through” America’s regional partners.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the best indicator of the United States’ recognition of an enduring need to remain engaged with its allies and partners is its so-called “rebalance” to the Asia-Indo-Pacific region in 2011. Admiral Harry

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<sup>41</sup> Rodriguez, *Statement*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Rodriguez, *Statement*, 20.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph L. Votel, *Statement of General Joseph L. Votel on the Posture of US Central Command* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2017), 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> Votel, *Statement*, 5.

Harris' posture statement as Commander of United States Pacific Command (PACOM) emphasizes not only the need to remain engaged with America's regional partners and allies, but also a requirement to keep US forces forward-deployed in the region to ensure a rapid military response to crises. Admiral Harris' 2016 Posture Statement reflected then-Secretary of Defense Carter's elements of the military component of the Asia-Pacific Rebalance. In addition to developing sufficient military technologies to defeat emerging threats and fielding the "right numbers" of existing capabilities to the region, Secretary Carter listed "reinforcing alliances and partnerships" as a PACOM priority.<sup>45</sup> To this end, PACOM works with allies and partners to enhance their capacity to respond to regional threats. As Admiral Harris writes, "we are stronger together."<sup>46</sup> PACOM conducts traditional military-capacity-building activities, such as Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and hosting multi-national exercises, but also facilitates extensive military exchange and liaison officers with America's bilateral partners. Additionally, through institutions such as the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS), PACOM works to build a community of like-minded nations that are committed to maintaining the international rules-based order.<sup>47</sup>

A unique facet of PACOM's area of responsibility is the tremendous distances involved. Harris writes, "the tyranny of distance and short indications and warning timelines place a premium on robust, modern, and agile forward-deployed forces at high levels of readiness."<sup>48</sup> In view of the region's "tyranny of distance," Admiral Harris supports forward-stationed forces west of the International Date Line. Their closer proximity to potential conflict zones increases decision space and

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<sup>45</sup> Harry B. Harris, Jr., *Statement of Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., Commander US Pacific Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Harris, Jr., *Statement*, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Harris, Jr., *Statement*, 10.

<sup>48</sup> Harris, Jr., *Statement*, 7.

decreases response time. For this reason, PACOM has endeavored to increase the forward presence of US forces within the territory of several of America's mutual-defense-treaty allies<sup>49</sup> The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin in Australia, for example, has increased from 250 to 1,177 Marines. Additionally, the US Army's Pacific Pathways initiative sequentially deploys small units to multiple countries in the region for training. Their forward presence, Harris writes, "enables rapid response to humanitarian emergencies or regional crisis."<sup>50</sup>

The posture statement of America's GCCs reflect the United States' strategic imperative to remain engaged in the world. They "operationalize" the guidance laid down in America's strategic security documents, which recognize the United States' enormous stake in maintaining the current world order. This is the United States' "engagement imperative" – that if the US does not continue to undergird the rules-based liberal world order, then, as Cohen warns, "its own prosperity and freedoms will suffer as well."<sup>51</sup> At the heart of the engagement imperative, though, is an acknowledgement that, though the United States possesses tremendous power and influence, successfully engaging with its allies and partners to collaboratively and cooperatively resolve global issues requires understanding those allies' and partners' perspectives, values, priorities, and interests. This realization was at the forefront of Major General George Olmsted's mind throughout his military and civilian careers, and as he created the Olmsted Foundation, to which we now turn.

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<sup>49</sup> Five of the United States' seven mutual defense treaty allies are in the PACOM AOR. These include Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. See Harris, Jr., *Statement*, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Harris, *Statement*, 17.

<sup>51</sup> Cohen, *The Big Stick*, 28.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The Olmsted Scholar Program**

*The greatest leaders must be educated broadly.*

- Major General George Olmsted

### **Major General George Olmsted**

To truly understand the genesis of the Olmsted Scholar Program, one must consider its founder and namesake, Major General George Olmsted. Olmsted's military and civilian careers are fascinating. His forty-year military career was divided between active and reserve duty, between wartime and peacetime. In uniform, George Olmsted's military accomplishments were significant. He planned and oversaw America's military lend-lease programs in China, orchestrated clandestine US military operations against Japanese forces in China, and planned one of the largest rescue operations of the war – 35,000 prisoners of war liberated from Japanese prison camps in China and Mongolia without the loss of a single man. In the private sector, Olmsted created a multi-billion dollar banking and insurance business with global operations. Remarking to a February 1971 meeting of the Alexandria-Virginia Kiwanis Club on the growing number of US citizens living “off-shore” in foreign countries, Olmsted noted that Americans “must learn the lesson of living with local partners, interdependence as they call it.”<sup>1</sup> Olmsted’s emphasis on interdependence – on appreciating the perspectives of and working with others – spanned his career. The seeds of this multi-cultural perspective were sown during Olmsted’s years at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

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<sup>1</sup> Howard L. Dutkin, *Soldier, Patriot, Financier: A Biographical Sketch of Major General George Olmsted* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1971), 175.

Olmsted entered West Point on 4 November 1918, one week before the armistice that ended World War I.<sup>2</sup> His career at the academy was remarkable. Academically, athletically, and in terms of leadership, young Cadet Olmsted stood out among his peers. He graduated second in his class academically and was one of only two Distinguished Graduates among 102 cadets.<sup>3</sup> Olmsted earned the Army “A” for managing the school’s football team, was the school’s featherweight boxing champion, and its individual foils champion.<sup>4</sup> He qualified as an expert marksman with the rifle and pistol. But perhaps the most telling indicator of Olmsted’s character was the support and trust he garnered from his peers. The Cadet Corps elected him three times to be their class president. Olmsted’s page in West Point’s *Howitzer* Yearbook for the Class of 1922 described him with almost embarrassing praise. The distance a train will run uphill without an engine, it notes, “measures the climb we would have made without George to act as the motive force to run our class machinery.”<sup>5</sup> For many of the Class’ hard jobs and knotty problems, the *Howitzer* claimed, the solution of “Let George do it,” never failed them.

After graduation, Olmsted joined the Army’s field artillery. He finished first in his class at artillery school and served briefly as a second lieutenant in the 83rd Artillery Regiment. Tragically, Olmsted’s older brother, Jeraud, an ensign in the US Navy, died on August 21, 1923.<sup>6</sup> This took a heavy emotional toll on George and his family. Faced with dim promotion prospects in the peacetime army, he resigned his regular commission and returned to Des Moines, Iowa, his hometown. There he started an insurance business with his father. Olmsted never totally

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<sup>2</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, *General Olmsted and His Scholars* (Falls Church, VA: The George and Carol Olmsted Foundation, 2009), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 36.

severed ties with the military though. He joined the Iowa National Guard in 1924 and served there for another 11 years. From 1923 to 1941, he steadily grew his business, acquiring increasingly larger insurance and banking interests throughout the Midwest. In January 1941, with the specter of war looming large for the United States, Olmsted was recalled to active duty. At that time, his business had grown to almost one million dollars in interests and assets.<sup>7</sup>

After nearly a year-long delay to arrange his business affairs, Olmsted reported for duty as chief of the distribution branch of the International Division of the Army Service Forces (ASF) staff in January 1942.<sup>8</sup> ASF's International Division was responsible for allocating and scheduling the transfer of ground-combat war materials from the US to its allies. Olmsted was responsible for reviewing, prioritizing, and filling the seemingly infinite number of requests for military aid. His duties required him to travel extensively and engage with numerous foreign officials. Over the next two years, Olmsted dealt with forty-five different countries and managed various lend-lease and military assistance programs.<sup>9</sup>

In late 1944, Olmsted received orders to travel to Chungking, China, the temporary capital of the displaced government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. His mission was to resolve a personal tug-of-war between General Joseph Stilwell, US Commander in the China-Burma-India theater and Chiang. While Olmsted was enroute, Stilwell was replaced by US Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer. After Olmsted arrived, Wedemeyer entreated him to stay and help him tackle the political, military, and economic problems faced by Chiang and his allies.<sup>10</sup> Olmsted soon joined Wedermeyer's team and established a

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<sup>7</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 80.

<sup>8</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 60.

<sup>10</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 88.

new general-staff section known as G-5. It was responsible for all aspects of filling Chiang's requests for aid under Lend-Lease, exploring ways to stimulate Chinese domestic sources of production, and working with the Chinese to solve their governmental or political problems. In addition to these responsibilities, Wedermeyer later entrusted Olmsted with command of clandestine operations against the Japanese, which consisted largely of espionage behind enemy lines, sabotage, and demolition.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps Olmsted's most significant accomplishment during his time in China was the successful rescue of nearly 35,000 allied POWs from Japanese prison camps in China. Fearing that upon Japan's surrender, Japanese prison camp commanders would eliminate their charges, in July 1945 Olmsted was ordered to devise a rescue plan. The plan Olmsted and his team formulated rested on their understanding of Japanese psychology. From experience, Olmsted knew that the first reaction of the Japanese when faced with an unexpected move was to do nothing. Capitalizing on this, and based on the assumption that the Allies would likely know of Japan's surrender before word reached the remote Japanese POW camps, the rescue plan called for 11 seven-man teams, comprised of radio operators, linguists, and several "tough guys," to parachute near each camp.<sup>12</sup> Each team commander would bear a letter from General Wedermeyer addressed to each camp commander by name. The letters communicated that the Japanese emperor had surrendered, that the Americans had the name of each captive in the camp, and that if any prisoners were killed or injured, the camp commander would be held personally responsible.

Within minutes of receiving word of Japan's surrender on 14 August 1945, B-26 bombers carrying the rescue teams took off on their

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<sup>11</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 90.

<sup>12</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 111.

mission. Several tense days followed as Olmsted and his staff awaited word from the eleven unarmed rescue teams. Messages of mission success soon came in via radio. In only one camp did the Japanese make a show of resistance, where bayonet-bearing soldiers advanced on a rescue team before being halted by their camp commander. During the next several days, airlifts were arranged to carry the POWs to Kunming or over the hump to India. Among the 35,000 rescued POWs were four aviators who had flown with General Doolittle in his 1942 raid on Tokyo and General MacArthur's second-in-command, Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainright, who had surrendered Corregidor in 1942.<sup>13</sup>

Olmsted returned to Iowa at the end of 1945 and remained in uniform until May 1946, when he left regular service for a position in the Army reserves and resumed his business affairs. His expertise in military aid soon brought him back to government service. Olmsted spent the second half of 1950 as a civilian adviser to the Undersecretary of the Army, and in early 1951 he returned to active duty. Later that year, Olmsted was assigned to the office of the Secretary of Defense and took charge of the Defense Department's military aid program worldwide.<sup>14</sup> The US transferred nearly six million tons of military materiel to its friends and allies between mid-1950 and early 1953, totaling approximately \$4 billion dollars in value.<sup>15</sup> Olmsted's duties again involved worldwide travel and negotiations with foreign leaders – experiences that reaffirmed for him the importance of being able to understand and appreciate foreign leaders and foreign cultures. In 1953, Olmsted left active duty for the reserves and again returned to Iowa. He retired from the military as a Major General in December, 1959.

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<sup>13</sup> Dutkin, *Soldier*, 113.

<sup>14</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 97.

<sup>15</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 98.

## **Founding The Olmsted Scholar Program**

After retiring from the Army, Olmsted focused on his business interests. Through a series of acquisitions, Olmsted steadily grew his business holdings. His two largest purchases were Washington DC's International Bank and New York City's Financial General. The "Leverage-loving General," so-dubbed by a 1961 Forbes magazine article, grew his holdings under the aegis of the International Bank. By 1968, the Bank's underlying assets totaled more than three billion dollars.<sup>16</sup> Olmsted's financial career reached its apex during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Beginning in 1981, his health gradually declined. A massive stroke in 1987 confined Olmsted to his bed, under fulltime nursing care. He died at his home on 8 October 1998, at the age of 97. His success in uniform and in business provided Olmsted with the motivation and means to establish the George Olmsted Foundation in 1958.

Throughout Olmsted's military and business careers, he became convinced that a broad understanding of the social sciences and liberal arts, to include economics, history, political science, and international affairs were essential for America's leaders.<sup>17</sup> Principal among the Foundation's many charitable endeavors was the creation of The Olmsted Scholar Program. The aims of the Program are best summed up by Olmsted himself in an early publication:

In a world in which the United States of America has constantly increasing responsibilities, our military officers and leaders must make many contacts with citizens of other nations. The problems with which they will be confronted, while serving either at home or abroad, are almost certain to involve many foreign nations, their governments and their civilian nationals as well as their military...[the Foundation] offers to select officers an opportunity to become Olmsted

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<sup>16</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 134.

Scholars and to prepare themselves to meet these problems by obtaining the broadening experience of study, residence, and travel abroad.<sup>18</sup>

Olmsted believed that young career officers, educated abroad in a foreign language and immersed in a foreign culture constituted a potentially important resource. The purpose of his Foundation would be to create this cadre of warrior-statesmen.

In April 1959, the Foundation's Board of Directors voted to approve implementation of the Olmsted Scholar Program.<sup>19</sup> The Foundation approached the Army, Navy, and Air Force later that month with the proposal that it would pay to send two academy graduates from each service overseas annually for two years of foreign study in a foreign language at an overseas university. The Services responded favorably to the Foundation's offer. A letter to Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy formalized the Foundation's proposal. On 6 October 1959, the first six Olmsted Scholars were selected and slated to begin study overseas in September 1960.<sup>20</sup>

As the date for the Scholars' departure approached, the Army concluded that without prior passage of a law enabling its officers to accept donations in the form the Foundation proposed, namely, tuition payments and travel stipends, its Scholars could not participate in the program's first year.<sup>21</sup> The Navy sent its first two Olmsted Scholars abroad to study as agreed under the program, but paid for its Scholar's tuition out of appropriated funds instead of funds from the Foundation. Only the Air Force saw no objection to allowing its Scholars to fully participate in the program as originally envisioned. The Air Force reasoned that tuition payments by non-governmental organizations in such cases constituted permissible gifts to the United States rather than

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Dutkin, *Soldier*, 192.

<sup>19</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 135.

<sup>20</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 137.

<sup>21</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 137.

impermissible gifts to individual Scholars.<sup>22</sup> At the end of July 1962, Congress passed Public Law 87-555, amending Title 10 of the US code “to permit members of the Armed Forces to accept fellowships, scholarships, or grants...for the development of recognized potential for future career service.” This legislation allowed the services to participate in the Olmsted Scholar Program as conceived by General Olmsted.

The structure of the Olmsted Scholar Program today remains largely unchanged from 1960. Upon selection by the Olmsted Foundation, Scholars attend language training at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, at the Defense Language Institute-Washington, in the Washington, DC area, or within their host country. Language training can last from six months to one year. After their language training, Olmsted Scholars move to their appointed foreign country and enroll in a graduate studies program at a foreign university. Scholars’ families are highly encouraged go abroad with them, but they are not required to do so. The total time Scholars spend abroad ranges from two to three years, depending on where they attend language training. While abroad, Scholars are expected to travel extensively within and outside of their host country.

Through foreign study, travel, and residence abroad, Scholars experience a depth of cultural immersion afforded few other military officers. While Scholars’ initial time in their host country is most often spent learning *how* to live there – involving such tasks as paying bills, using local transportation, enrolling children in school, etc. – this gives way, over time, to a deeper cultural experience. As they settle into their new homes, the Olmsted Foundation claims, “the cultural differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes begin to broaden Scholars’ awareness of the people and society in their host country, including a better idea of how

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<sup>22</sup> Olmsted Foundation, *Olmsted*, 138.

they view the United States.”<sup>23</sup> The end result is an ability to see the world from perspectives other than one’s own. After two years of cultural immersion, Scholars think differently, are able to anticipate varied perspectives, and question their own assumptions. These attributes imbue Scholars with a perceptual openness that, in the view of the Olmsted Foundation, “readies them for a lifetime of leadership challenges and responsibility in any environment, whether it is in the military or private sector.”<sup>24</sup>

While abroad, Olmsted Scholars remain on Active Duty and continue to receive their regular compensation and benefits, including cost-of-living and housing allowances. The Olmsted Foundation provides additional financial support to Scholars in the form of grants. The Foundation funds the travel and accommodation of newly selected Scholars to attend a Scholar Orientation Weekend in Washington, DC. Additionally, the Foundation provides funding to support the language training of Scholars’ spouses. If Scholars elect to attend in-country language training, the Foundation offers funding for this as well. Before Scholars move abroad, the Foundation also funds a familiarization trip for Scholars and their spouses to their assigned study location. After Scholars move abroad, the Foundation covers the costs of Scholars’ tuition and provides an annual grant to defray the costs of travel, cultural immersion activities, and other university expenses.<sup>25</sup>

### **Olmsted Scholars and Scholar Selection**

The process of becoming an Olmsted Scholar, like the Olmsted Scholar Program itself, remains largely unchanged since its inception. Each military branch and the US Coast Guard (beginning in 2017)

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<sup>23</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, “What We Do: A New Perspective,” The George and Carol Olmsted Foundation, March 2017, <http://www.olmstedfoundation.org/what-we-do/>

<sup>24</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, “What We Do”

<sup>25</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, “What We Do”

nominates Olmsted Scholar candidates at various times in the year. The Olmsted Foundation then reviews application packages and conducts phone interviews with all candidates. The Foundation selects finalists and presents them to the Olmsted Foundation Board of Directors. The Board of Directors then makes the final Olmsted Scholar Class selections and assigns Scholars to their study location and university. After this, each service notifies Olmsted Scholars of their selection.

There are, however, several ways the program has changed since its inception, which are worthy of note. Initially, for example, at least two Scholars from each service were required to have graduated from one of the Service Academies. The Foundation dropped this requirement in the 1980s to ensure the most qualified officer candidates, regardless of commissioning source, were afforded the opportunity to apply. Another way the Olmsted Scholar Program has changed is in regard to eligible military career fields. Only officers from primarily “operational” career fields are eligible, but what the Foundation considers to be “operational” has changed over time.<sup>26</sup> For example, over the last ten years, as military operations have become increasingly reliant on the cyber domain, each of the military services have acted to create cyber “operators.” Additionally, the services have created dedicated pilots and systems operators of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA). Cyber operators and RPA pilots did not exist when the Olmsted Scholar Program was founded. Nevertheless, the program has evolved to ensure these new kinds of operators are eligible to become Olmsted Scholars.

The means and methods of warfare, of course, change over time, particularly in response to the development of new technologies, such as the Internet and RPAs. So too do critical warfighting tasks. Rosen argues that peacetime change in military organizations occur as the

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<sup>26</sup> For a complete listing of eligible career fields by Service, see Appendix A.

result of the organization's adoption of a new theory of victory.<sup>27</sup> One way military officers influence the adoption of a new theory of victory is through the military promotion system, by promoting those officers who confirm or evince the new theory. Furthermore, the military organization must define new critical missions and new everyday tasks so that military personnel can understand the criteria by which their effectiveness is measured. Without the development of new critical tasks, Rosen warns, the new theory of victory remains abstract and may not affect the way the organization actually behaves.<sup>28..</sup>

The Olmsted Foundation staff is aware that measures of effectiveness can change over time. One way they attempt to account for this is by enlisting the help of Olmsted Scholar Program alumni. After assessing the strength of an Olmsted Scholar candidate's application package, the Foundation sends some packages to graduated Scholars who have gone on to command in their career field.<sup>29</sup> In this way, the evolution of a career field's "new critical tasks," are accounted for. An infantry officer's application, for example, may be forwarded to a graduated Scholar who is serving as an infantry brigade commander for his opinion on that candidate's effectiveness and future leadership potential.

The requirement that Olmsted Scholars come from operational career fields has its roots in General Olmsted's belief that Scholars be warfighters.<sup>30</sup> The Olmsted Scholar Program's career field eligibility criteria have changed accordingly, but what has not changed is the Foundation's desire to select those officers who, in its view, have the greatest potential to reach Flag or General officer rank.<sup>31</sup> Those

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 20.

<sup>28</sup> Rosen

<sup>29</sup> The Olmsted Foundation (various staff), interview by the author, 17 April 2017

<sup>30</sup> The Olmsted Foundation (various staff), interview by the author, 17 April 2017.

<sup>31</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

individuals, as they rise in rank and responsibility during their military careers, are best able to advance the Foundation’s values and General Olmsted’s vision.

No two Olmsted Scholars are the same. Nevertheless, there are characteristics the Foundation considers desirable in an Olmsted Scholar. These include:

Demonstrated scholastic ability and language aptitude; demonstrated qualities of leadership to include integrity, imagination and initiative; personal attributes including devotion to duty, a desire to mix with people, and general adaptability; strong professional performance and promotion potential; and dedication to a career as a military officer.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to these characteristics, Olmsted Scholars must meet certain demographically-based eligibility criteria set by the Foundation. For example, Scholars must be active duty-officers in one of the four branches of the US military or the Coast Guard.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, eligible officers must have at least three but no more than 11 years of total active federal military service as of 1 April of the year of Scholar selection by the Board of Directors. This is to ensure that Scholar candidates have had enough time to demonstrate their performance potential but also enough time to use their new skills for the betterment of the military and the country.

In addition to the Olmsted Foundation’s selection process outlined above, each service conducts its own “in-house” selection process prior to submitting its pool of candidates to the Foundation for consideration. The Army, for example, solicits applications for the Olmsted Scholar Program through its annual Broadening Opportunities Program (B.O.P) Catalog. After receiving applications, the Army’s Human Resource’s Command (HRC) convenes an Olmsted Scholarship Selection Panel to

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<sup>32</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, “What We Do”

<sup>33</sup> For a complete listing of each Service’s eligible career fields, please see the Appendix.

identify its “Top” candidates to the Foundation.<sup>34</sup> The Navy Personnel Command sends out its call for Olmsted applicants through an administrative message (NAVADMIN). Like the Army, a Navy selection board meets to review and select its candidates for the Foundation’s consideration. The Air Force, like the Army and Navy, publishes an annual call for applications and convenes an Olmsted Scholar Candidate Selection Board at the Air Force Personnel Center. The Marine Corps publishes its annual call for Olmsted applicants via a Marine Corps Administrative Message (MARADMIN). Marine applicants are screened by the Corps’ Commandant’s Career Level Education Board. The Board identifies which officers qualify for educational opportunities and then vectors officers along a specific educational track. Several of the officers it designates for the Foreign Area Officer track it also encourages to apply to the Olmsted Scholar Program.

How many Olmsted Scholar candidates (i.e., officers selected as candidates by their service screening boards) does the process described above produce in any given year? The number of candidates from the services vary annually, but on average, the numbers are relatively consistent. For example, over the past eight years, the average number of applicants from the Army was 39 (35 in 2017); from the Navy, 31 (34 in 2017); from the Marine Corps, 17 (15 in 2017); and from the Air Force, 82 (73 in 2017).<sup>35</sup> Out of this candidate pool, the Foundation selects 18-19 Olmsted Scholars annually. This includes 5 from the Army, Navy and Air Force, 3 from the Marine Corps, and beginning in 2018, one from the US Coast Guard. Historically speaking then, only 7% of Air Force candidates are selected to be Olmsted Scholars. This corresponds to a

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<sup>34</sup> HRC, “Broadening Opportunity Programs building a cohort of leaders that allow the Army to succeed at all levels in all environments,” US Army, <https://www.hrc.army.mil>

<sup>35</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

12% selection rate for the Army, 15.6% for the Navy, and 19% for the Marine Corps.<sup>36</sup>

Despite selecting Scholars from a pool of 100-150 candidates annually, the Foundation struggles to select certain kinds of officers. One reason for this is based on the needs of the military service. The Olmsted Scholar Program takes officers away from their operational career fields for up to three years. Some operational specialties, particularly navy fighter pilots, see this as too long. Naval tactical aviators, for example, would ostensibly participate in the Olmsted Scholar Program at a time when they would otherwise compete for selection as unit Department Heads. By being away from one's operational specialty during this critical time in the career of a naval fighter pilot, one diminishes the likelihood of selection for promotion. As a result, Navy fighter pilots are told, in writing, that if they are selected as an Olmsted Scholar, their careers as pilots are effectively over.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, the Foundation acknowledges that one of the major challenges it faces is building the diversity of its cadre of Scholars. One can define diversity in many ways – ethnically, socio-economically, by commissioning source, by educational background, by combat specialty, and so on. While the ethnic diversity of the cadre of Olmsted Scholars is not something the Foundation tracks, it is cognizant of the fact that producing diversity of thought and diversity of perspective is, in a way, one of the goals of the Olmsted Scholar Program itself.<sup>38</sup> It is one of the reasons Scholars are sent abroad to learn a foreign language and a

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<sup>36</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Vice Admiral James Foggo, III, USN (Director, Navy Staff), interview by the author, 5 April 2017. Beginning with the Olmsted Scholar Class of 2018, the Olmsted Foundation has instituted a trial program in which it will consider applications from naval fighter pilots who have *more* than 11 years of total active military service. This will allow pilots to complete their tours as department heads. The hope is that it will enable naval fighter pilots to participate in the Olmsted Scholar and not negatively impact their career progression. 1

<sup>38</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

foreign culture in the first place – so that they can learn to see the world differently.

Neither demographic data on the race, nor the ethnicity of the current cadre of Olmsted Scholars are available. What is available, though, is data on Scholars' gender and, as an element of diversity, this is worthy of examination. One approach is to examine gender breakdown of the Scholar community against that of US military in general and the service branches specifically. One could further examine the Scholar community against the pool of eligible officers from which Scholars are chosen. The purpose is to understand, at a more granular level, the texture of the current Olmsted Scholar cadre.

The DoD's *Profile of the Military Community*, breaks out the population of the US military along many categories, including gender. In 2015, for example, 17% of Active Duty US military officers were female.<sup>39</sup> Broken down further by military service branch, 16.8% of Army officers were female. This corresponds to 17.4% of officers in the Navy; 20.3% of officers in the Air Force; and 7.1% of officers in the Marine Corps.<sup>40</sup> Not all officer career fields are eligible, though, for selection as Olmsted Scholars. One must therefore ascertain the gender breakdown of the pool of eligible officers, based on career field and time in service (3-11 years), by military branch. Unfortunately, only data from the Air Force could be obtained at the time of writing. Nevertheless, the data are interesting. Data from 2015 (the most recent available) reveal that 13.8% of Active Duty Air Force officers from Olmsted-eligible career fields, with 3-11 years of commissioned service were female.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Department of Defense, *2015 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2015), iii.

<sup>40</sup> DoD, *Demographics*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Data on gender demographics by Air Force Specialty Codes was obtained from the Air Force Interactive Demographic Analysis System. The most recent complete data set available was from Fiscal Year 2015. For more information, see US Air Force, "Interactive Demographic Analysis System (IDEAS)," Air Force Personnel Center, accessed 3 May 2017, <http://www.afpc.af.mil/>

How do these gender breakdowns compare with the current pool of Olmsted Scholars? The Foundation selected the first female Olmsted Scholar in 1979. Since 1979, 47 female Olmsted Scholars have been selected – about 9% of the total number of Scholars selected. This data, by itself, is hardly suggestive. Without knowing the percentage of female Olmsted Scholar candidates, or even applicants, it is difficult to ascertain whether there exists within the Foundation an implicit bias against or preference towards selecting female Olmsted Scholars. Nevertheless, the percentage of Scholars who are female is nearly half that of military altogether. One could ask, in view of this, whether the Foundation, by limiting eligibility criteria to certain career fields, is depriving from its pool of potential candidates a degree of diversity. This area deserves more attention and research.

In addition to selecting Olmsted Scholars, the Foundation also determines where Scholars study. Many factors influence this decision. From a practical standpoint, the Foundation only sends Scholars to those cities and universities where it believes Scholars will be safe and have a high probability of successfully completing a master's degree in a foreign language. To this end, the Foundation works closely with US Embassy Country Teams to assess whether a specific foreign environment is suitable for an Olmsted Scholar and the Scholar's family. The Foundation considers Russia, for example, to be a highly desirable location owing to that country's strategic importance.<sup>42</sup> In recent years, however, Scholars who have studied in Russia have been harassed and, in one case, even been accused of being a foreign agent, which led to that Scholar's deportation.

Beyond Russia, the Foundation desires to send a percentage of its Scholars to regions it views as strategically relevant each year. For

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<sup>42</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview. The Foundation hopes to send 6% of its Olmsted Scholars to Russia annually, but owing to rising tensions between the US and Russia, has been unable to send a Scholar to Russia since 2014.

example, the Foundation hopes to send 15% of its Scholars to Western Europe, 13% to Eastern Europe, 14% to China, and 14% to South America annually.<sup>43</sup> The remaining Scholars are sent to various countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The Foundation also tries to ensure that not more than one Scholar is resident in any one city at the same time. This is to ensure Scholars are distributed broadly from one Olmsted Scholar Class to the next.

Since its inception in 1958 and the selection of the first class of Olmsted Scholars in 1960, the Olmsted Foundation and the Olmsted Scholar Program have been guided by General Olmsted's conviction that the "greatest leaders must be educated broadly." Olmsted's conception of a "broad education," included not just a formal education in economics, political science, history or international relations, but also an "informal" education in the values and mores of foreign cultures. His goal in creating the Foundation was to create a cadre of warrior-scholars within the ranks of the US military who, by their education and experiences, would be ready to tackle and overcome the challenges confronting the US as it engaged with other countries in the world. The military services and the Olmsted Foundation have endeavored to select some of the finest officers for participation in the Olmsted Scholar program. Over time, the selection process and the makeup of the cadre of Olmsted Scholars has changed. While Scholars no doubt acquire language skills, cultural fluency, and regional insight during their time abroad, the question remains as to whether or not they, in turn, add value to America's military enterprise. Essentially, are Olmsted Scholars valuable to and valued by the US military? The next chapter addresses these questions.

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<sup>43</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Assessing Value**

*It is DoD policy that foreign language skills, regional expertise and cultural capabilities are enduring critical competencies essential to the DoD mission and must be managed to maximize the accession, development, sustainment, enhancement, and employment of these critical skills to the DoD mission.<sup>1</sup>*

*DoDD 5160.41E*

### **The Value of Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC)**

Scholars emerge from the OSP with fluency in a foreign language and with insight into a foreign region and culture. As Abbe writes, “cross-cultural competence simply refers to the abilities that enable one to operate effectively in different cultures.”<sup>2</sup> After two to three years of living and studying abroad, Scholars’ cross-cultural competence is high. What remains is to demonstrate whether the military services value the language, regional expertise, and culture (LREC) capabilities Olmsted Scholars possess. Basically, do the military services value LREC? To answer this question, a look back at the DoD’s moves to increase the language and cultural skills of its personnel is necessary.

In 2005, the DoD launched the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap. The Roadmap was issued by then-Deputy Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul Wolfowitz and outlined steps the DoD had to take to:

ensure that foreign language capability and accompanying regional area expertise are developed and maintained to be

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5160.41E, *Defense Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Program*, 9 February 2016, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Allison Abbe, “The Historical Development of Cross-cultural Competence,” in *Cross-Cultural Competence*, ed. Robert Greene Sands & Allison Greene-Sands (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 35.

employed as *strategic assets* in the Global War on Terrorism and in future military operations.<sup>3</sup>

The Roadmap represented the DoD's plan to achieve language capabilities necessary to support the 2004 National Defense Strategy, which called for military forces capable of meeting the United States' global-security interests. At the time, the DoD was transitioning to a more expeditionary force, which foretold increased requirements for language and regional knowledge to not only work with new-coalition partners in a wide variety of activities but also confront enemies who spoke "less-commonly-taught languages." Consequently, the Roadmap concluded, that the need for foreign-language capability would not abate. Warfighting in the 21st century, it asserted, "will require forces that have foreign language capabilities beyond those generally available in today's force."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to identifying LREC capabilities as strategic assets for the DoD, the Roadmap also required the DoD take specific steps to grow LREC skills among its personnel. Some of these deserve attention as they mirror what the Olmsted Scholar Program does and indicate the DoD's commitment to growing LREC within the military. To create foundational-language and regional-area expertise, for instance, the Roadmap mandated the military departments "incorporate regional area content in language training [and] professional military education and development"<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Roadmap directed the military departments to "exploit 'study-abroad' opportunities to facilitate language acquisition."<sup>6</sup> Olmsted Scholars do exactly this while living and studying abroad.

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<sup>3</sup> DoD, *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2005), 1.

<sup>4</sup> DoD, *Roadmap*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> DoD, *Roadmap*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> DoD, *Roadmap*, 7.

The Roadmap also mandated that the military departments demonstrate the value they placed in their LREC-enabled personnel. The Roadmap required, for example, that the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness “identify and recognize the value of personnel achieving and maintaining the highest levels of proficiency in critical languages by paying a *substantially* increased Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP).”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Roadmap called for the services not only to develop and manage LREC-skilled personnel as critical strategic assets but to promote them competitively.<sup>8</sup> In essence, the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap recognized LREC-enabled personnel as critically important to the DoD and required the military services treat them as such by paying them more and promoting them competitively.

To assess the DoD’s progress on implementing the reforms called for by the Roadmap, the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services’ Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held hearings in 2008 and 2010. Its 2010 hearing was entitled “Beyond the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap: Bearing the Burden for Today’s Educational Shortcomings.”<sup>9</sup> The title of the hearing itself indicated the Subcommittee’s perspective that any DoD dearth of LREC-enabled personnel reflected a national capability gap, with implications beyond the DoD. In his opening remarks, Subcommittee Chairman Dr. Vic Snyder lamented that “the military inherits the challenges that we have in the country that we do not emphasize language skills enough.”<sup>10</sup> Chairman Snyder’s opening remarks reveal his perspective on the

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<sup>7</sup> DoD, *Roadmap*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> DoD, *Roadmap*, 13.

<sup>9</sup> House, *Beyond the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap: Bearing the Burden for Today’s Educational Shortcomings*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., 2010, 1.

<sup>10</sup> House, *Bearing the Burden*, 2.

importance of LREC skills. The fact that far too many of us [Americans] speak only English was a “national problem” in his view.<sup>11</sup>

Three primary witnesses testified before the Subcommittee. These included: Nancy Weaver, Director of the Defense Language Office, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Brigadier General Walter Golden, USA, Director of Manpower and Personnel (J1), Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Sharon Pickup, Director of the Office of Defense Capabilities and Management of the Government Accountability Office. In each of their testimonies, the witnesses highlighted the importance of LREC capabilities to DoD operations.

The witnesses noted, though, that building language and regional expertise required years – not weeks – of work. In acknowledgement of this, DoD had instituted the State Roadmap Project in which the DoD provided funding and personnel to help states create roadmaps for energizing foreign language within their classrooms. At the time of the hearing, Ohio, Oregon, and Texas had developed language roadmaps. This DoD-led effort to re-energize language within the curriculums of state educational curricula reflects the degree of importance the Department placed on growing LREC capability at a grass-roots level. At the time, DoD contributed \$750,000 annually to support K-12 language programs through FY2015.<sup>12</sup> While this amount is almost embarrassingly small in consideration of the DoD’s overall budget, it does reflect the Department’s desire to grow LREC capabilities from the ground up. This was similar to the Obama Administration’s push to grow Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills within the US population. Hearings such as this show the government’s conviction, beyond the DoD itself, that LREC capabilities are important to America’s

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<sup>11</sup> House, *Bearing the Burden*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> House, *Bearing the Burden*, 59.

warfighters. As General McChrystal said in a 2010 memo outlining counterinsurgency training guidance for ISAF, “language skill is as important as your [the warfighter’s] other basic combat skills.”<sup>13</sup>

Reflecting the criticality of LREC to the DoD’s ongoing operations, and in accordance with its 2005 Roadmap, the Department developed several policy directives and instructions. DoD Directive (DoDD) 5160.41E, for example, expanded the department’s policy on paying Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) to ROTC cadets and eligible civilian employees.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, DoDD 5160.40E required the military departments to organize, train, and equip forces to meet operational requirements for LREC and develop career models for those personnel that led to their greater retention.<sup>15</sup> DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5160.70, meanwhile, established policies for the management of the LREC program itself. It built on DoDD 5160.41E by recognizing regional expertise and culture as distinct from, but complementary to language, and established proficiency levels for each.

The DoD’s 2005 Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, and the departmental directives and policies it spawned, institutionalize LREC capabilities within DoD and acknowledge the criticality of LREC to operational success. Congressional hearings further indicate the degree to which the USG, not just the DoD, views LREC as vitally important. Though the DoD’s attempt to grow LREC skills among the US population seems woefully underfunded (\$750,000 out of annual budget measured in the hundreds of billions), the department’s foray into the educational system is noteworthy as it shows the DoD is so convinced of the need to grow LREC skills within its forces that it is willing to experiment in a potentially politically dangerous environment. State and local governments can be leery of the federal government interfering in their

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<sup>13</sup> As quoted by Subcommittee Chairman Snyder in House, *Bearing the Burden*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> DoDD 5160.41E, *LREC*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> DoDI 5160.41E, *LREC*, 7.

education systems. These examples demonstrate the DoD perceives LREC skills as strategically valuable and, perhaps, even critical to its operational success.

### **Indicators of Institutional Value of Olmsted Scholars**

By their training and cultural immersion, Olmsted Scholars embody the DoD's ideal LREC-enabled officer – they are equal parts warfighter and statesman. Including the most recent Olmsted Scholar Class of 2018, there are 653 Olmsted Scholars. Since the first class of 1959, Scholars have studied at 218 foreign universities in 44 foreign languages in 60 foreign countries.<sup>16</sup> This uniquely skilled cadre of warrior-statesmen constitute a valuable strategic resource for the United States. Judging by the DoD's various directives and instructions, and Congress' apparent interest, one would expect the DoD to demonstrate it does in fact value Scholars in several ways. An increased FLPB, for example, could be seen as evidence that the DoD does indeed value its LREC personnel, including Olmsted Scholars. As the 2005 Roadmap states, though, the DoD should do more than just financially reward its LREC personnel; it should ensure they are retained and “promoted competitively.”

Are Olmsted Scholars promoted competitively? Are promotion rates even a valuable metric in assessing the degree to which the DoD values Olmsted Scholars? After all, it would be nearly impossible to claim that one's status as an Olmsted Scholar was singularly responsible for *causing* an officer to be selected for promotion. Promotion boards consider numerous factors in evaluating an officer's ability to serve in a higher grade, such as leadership experience, professional education, and career timing. A more reasonable approach, considering these caveats, would be an attempt to assess whether one's status as an Olmsted

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<sup>16</sup> Information provided to the author by the Olmsted Foundation

Scholar correlates with a higher likelihood of promotion, relative to non-Olmsted peers. Yet even here, it is difficult to attribute a promotion board's decision to promote an officer to any one variable. As the Olmsted Foundation professedly seeks the best quality applicants the military has, an argument could be made that those selected to be Olmsted Scholars would have been promoted anyway, regardless of their participation in the Olmsted Scholar program, because their records indicate future leadership potential. Perhaps the only way to determine whether one's status as an Olmsted Scholar was *the* decisive factor in one's selection for promotion would be to compare the promotion rates of those who were selected to be Scholars and declined against the rates of those who were selected to be Scholars and accepted. Unfortunately, this analysis is beyond the scope of this Thesis. Nevertheless, it would be an interesting area of further research. Thus, even though promotion rates are an imperfect measure, they inform our assessment of whether the DoD values Olmsted Scholars.

Whom the military services choose to promote also reveals something about their institutional priorities and perspectives. In *Winning the Next War*, Stephen Rosen presents a conception of America's military services as complex political communities. Each branch, per Rosen, has its own culture and distinct way of thinking about the way war should be conducted. Like any other complex political community, the military services' central concerns are "who should rule and how should the 'citizens' live."<sup>17</sup> Within the services, no permanent norm defining its primary professional activity exists. The Army may at times view its primary professional activity as conducting large ground assaults with armor and infantry, and at other times see its primary activity as using artillery to defeat an adversary from afar. This is one reason why

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 19.

Army officers identify themselves as infantrymen, calvarymen, or artillerymen. Distinctions among officers based on their combat specialties exist within the other services as well. Naval officers similarly identify as aviators, submariners, and surface-warfare officers, to name a few. Rosen contends that the transfer of resources within the services among the warfighter “tribes” and between the services generally reflects an ideological struggle between these groups that redefines the values that legitimize their activities.<sup>18</sup> This ideological struggle revolves around a new theory of victory - an explanation of what the next war will look like and how officers must fight it to win.

If the new theory of victory is the new ideology, Rosen writes, “then the new tasks and performance measures are the legislation that transform the ideology into government.”<sup>19</sup> Every form of government has its organizing principle that determines how power is acquired. In the military, power is not acquired through elections or by staging a coup d’etat. Power is won through influence over who is promoted to positions of senior command. Thus, Rosen asserts, “control over the promotion of officers is the source of power in the military.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, those selected to be senior leaders – imbued with power by their influence on the promotion of subordinate officers – reflect their service’s theory of victory, vision of the next war, and expectations of how it should be fought. In the 1950s and 1960s, for example, the US Air Force was led by “bomber generals,” who saw the bomber playing a central, and at times, the only necessary, role in war. If one accepts Rosen’s argument, then one may expect Olmsted Scholars – equipped with skills the DoD deems essential to success (warfighting *and* LREC) – to promote at higher rates than historical averages. If true, if the DoD does promote Olmsted Scholars at above average rates, then this could be interpreted not only

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<sup>18</sup> Rosen, *Winning*, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Rosen, *Winning*, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Rosen, *Winning*, 20.

as evidence of Scholar value to the DoD, but also of the DoD's commitment to a more cognitively nuanced way of war – one that leverages LREC to achieve effects by, with, and through the United States' diverse network of foreign allies and partners.

Unfortunately, scant data on military promotion statistics is publicly available. What is available, and what has been made available to this author, indicate Olmsted Scholars do indeed promote more competitively than historical averages, at least, within the Air Force.<sup>21</sup> Again, it should be noted that numerous factors contribute to a promotion board's decision to select an officer for promotion. Moreover, without the ability to evaluate whether one's status as an Olmsted Scholar was *the* variable that led to one's selection for promotion, the contention that Olmsted Scholars' increased rates of promotion indicate an institutional preference for a certain "theory of victory" - one that is LREC-centric - is limited. These caveats aside, the data seems to support the contention that the DoD values Olmsted Scholars.

As of 2015, there have been 210 Air Force Olmsted Scholars; 109 of whom remain on active duty.<sup>22</sup> On average, Air Force Olmsted Scholars begin the Olmsted Scholar program with 8 years of service, which is approximately the point at which most Air Force officers are selected for promotion to Major. After graduating from the program, AF Scholars continue to serve for another 18.6 years on average. Of the 101 Scholars who have retired or separated, 8% had reached general officer rank.<sup>23</sup> The Air Force historical average to reach general officer is 0.63%. With respect to Below the Zone promotions (BTZ – in other words, early promotion), Scholars also do well against the Air Force historical average.

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<sup>21</sup> Promotion data from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps was unattainable, which, unfortunately, further limits the strength of the broader claim that the DoD writ large highly values Olmsted Scholars.

<sup>22</sup> Air Force Personnel Center, *USAF Olmsted Scholar Statistics* (Randolph AFB, TX: US Air Force, 2015), 2.

<sup>23</sup> AFPC, *Olmsted*, 3.

Twenty six percent of Olmsted Scholars who participated in the program since the year 2000 were selected for promotion once below the zone (2.7% AF average), nine percent were selected twice BTZ (1.0% AF average) and 3.3% were selected BTZ three times (0.3% AF average).<sup>24</sup> This data demonstrates Air Force Scholars promote competitively against their non-Olmsted Air Force peers.

Another indicator of value is the number of Olmsted Scholars who attain Flag or General Officer rank. The Olmsted Foundation seeks officers who, in its view, have the greatest potential to become senior leaders. Since the first Olmsted Scholar Class (1960), 171 Scholars have reached the rank of O-6 (Colonel/Captain) and 42 Scholars have reached Flag/General officer rank.

**Table 1. Highest Rank Attained by Olmsted Scholars**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>O-6</b>	<b>O-7</b>	<b>O-8</b>	<b>O-9</b>	<b>O-10</b>	<b>Total GOs</b>	<b>% of Total GOs</b>
Army	50	4	6	2	1	13	31%
Navy	35	1	5	4	2	12	29%
Air Force	78	5	7	1	2	15	36%
Marines	8	0	0	2	0	2	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42</b>	

*Source: The Olmsted Foundation*

Table 1 (above) breaks down the number of Scholars who have reached O-6 rank or above since 1960. From the available data, it is not feasible to calculate promotion rates to O-6 or above. Many Scholars, for example, separated from active duty before being considered for promotion to O-6. Nevertheless, the scarcity of Scholars who have reached O-6 rank or above in the Marine Corps is striking.

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<sup>24</sup> AFPC, *Olmsted*, 5

What accounts for this disparity? Excluding the Olmsted Scholar Class of 2018, there are 635 Olmsted Scholars. Table 2 (below), shows the historical allocation of Olmsted Scholars since 1960 by service. It also shows the average Scholar allocation since the Olmsted Scholar Class of 2003.

**Table 2. Number of Olmsted Scholars by Service**

<b>Service*</b>	<b>Number of Scholars</b>	<b>Average Allocation</b>	<b>Average Allocation Since 2003</b>
Army	188	30%	25%
Navy	158	25%	25%
Air Force	216	34%	35%
Marines	73	11%	15%

*Source: The Olmsted Foundation*

*\*Note: The Olmsted Scholar Program was extended to the US Coast Guard beginning with the Olmsted Scholar Class of 2018.*

If one considers the number of Flag/General officers by service from Table 1 in conjunction with the historical average allocation of Olmsted Scholars by service in Table 2, then one could reasonably expect the percentage of Scholars who reach Flag/General officer rank to correspond with the overall allocation of Scholars by service. This is not the case, though, as the rightmost column of Table 1 shows only 4% of Scholars who have reached Flag/General officer rank come from the Marine Corps.

Moving beyond the number of Scholars who have reached Flag/General officer rank, there are currently no active duty Marine Corps Scholars above the rank of O-5.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, of the 21 Marine Scholars selected since 1980, who arguably could have been promoted to O-6 or above (based on time in grade, leadership experience, etc.), only

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<sup>25</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

one has made it to O-6.<sup>26</sup> Altogether, the data may suggest the Marine Corps does not value Marine Scholar's service after the Olmsted Scholar Program. Alternatively, it could reflect the Corps' misutilization of its Scholars, i.e., it places them in positions/roles after the Olmsted Scholar Program that do not enhance their promotability. In any case, the data suggests the Marine Corps does not value its Scholars at a level on par with the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Beyond promotion rates, another way the Air Force demonstrates its valuation of Olmsted Scholars is through its Professional Military Education (PME) system. Air Force Instruction 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, designates Olmsted Scholars as eligible to receive equivalency credit for attending Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) in residence.<sup>27</sup> In other words, Olmsted Scholars are coded as having attended Air Command and Staff College, or any of the other services' IDE programs, in residence. Air Force promotion boards generally place great value on having attended IDE in-residence as they believe it enhances an officers leadership potential. This designation assures Air Force Olmsted Scholars are not "penalized," from a developmental education perspective, for their participation in the Olmsted Scholar Program. Considered in conjunction with the fact that Olmsted Scholars promote at higher rates than Air Force historical averages, it is not unfair to conclude the Air Force values Olmsted Scholars.

What accounts for Air Force Scholars' better than average promotion rates? One reason may be Scholars' LREC capabilities. As the DoD's Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, directives, and policies make clear, LREC skills are essential to operational success – perhaps, as General McChrystal said, even as critical as warfighting skills. There are, however, other capabilities Scholars gain from the

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<sup>26</sup> The Olmsted Foundation, interview.

<sup>27</sup> AFI 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, 16 July 2010, 27.

Olmsted Scholar Program. These capabilities are particularly relevant to the development of senior military leaders, which are examined in Chapter 5.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Shaping Senior Leaders**

*We live in a complex world – perhaps the most complex it's ever been. Problems have a much greater potential to cascade and they are increasingly interrelated, which requires leaders who can see the whole picture. It requires leaders who can connect the dots of strategy.*

*- Lieutenant General Steven Shepro, USAF*

Since 2003, the DoD has recognized the strategic value of LREC skills. It has made a concerted effort to expand the LREC capabilities of its personnel through a series of formal programs. It has codified this effort through department-wide directives and instructions. The DoD has also signaled its valuation of LREC skills through increased pay to LREC-enabled personnel. The Air Force signals its valuation of Olmsted Scholars awarding them favorable developmental education status and, potentially, by promoting them at rates above the historical average. Overall, it appears, then, the DoD values Olmsted Scholars for their LREC capabilities and expresses that value through pay and promotion. There are other skills, though, which Olmsted Scholars gain through cultural immersion. These skills are of a more general, cognitive nature and they are particularly valuable to the development of America's senior military leaders. Thus, having examined the value of Olmsted Scholars as strategic resources from an institutional perspective, it is worthwhile to consider a more personal perspective on the value of the Olmsted Scholar Program from Scholars themselves, particularly from those who have senior military officers.

**General Henry Viccellio, USAF (ret)**  
Olmsted Scholar Class of 1967, Mexico City, Mexico

*Everything I had believed in was questioned...learning to look at issues, problems, and challenges as others do has served me well over the ensuing 40 years, becoming the basis of my personal style of leadership and decision making. For me, when General Olmsted said, “educated broadly,” I know exactly what he meant...seeing things through others’ eyes. I owe him a profound debt of gratitude*

- General Henry Viccellio, Jr. (USAF, ret)

In the fall of 1967, Henry Viccellio was a young Air Force fighter pilot recently returned from Vietnam. While there, he had applied to join the Thunderbirds, the USAF’s aerial demonstration team. He also applied to the Olmsted Scholar Program with a strong desire to study in Spanish in Europe or South America.<sup>1</sup> He was selected for the OSP, but rather than studying in Madrid or Buenos Aires, Viccellio was selected to attend the National Autonomous University of Mexico, in Mexico City. At the time of his selection for the OSP, Viccellio was surprised to learn he was heading to Mexico. After all, he had spent a significant amount of time on the Texas-Mexico border during pilot training. As he would learn later in Mexico City, however, his cursory exposure to Mexican culture while training in Texas paled in comparison to the breadth and nuance of the Mexican perspective that confronted him at University.

What confronted Viccellio was an environment in which anti-American feelings were open, prevalent, and on occasion, violent. He was the only “gringo” out of nearly 800 students. Almost all students and faculty subscribed to the communist perspective of world events advanced by Moscow and Beijing. Thousands of books from the Moscow

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<sup>1</sup> General Henry Viccellio, Jr. USAF (ret) (Commander, Air Education and Training Command, Commander, Air Force Materiel Command), interview by the author, 29 March 2017.

Freedom Press and Peking University Press were sold on the sidewalks. Student organizations distributed communist propaganda. Virtually all the text books he used in class, from economics to history, were politicized according to the tenets of communism. All his classes were run by young, anti-American, communist-inspired professors. At times, a professor would offer a positive perspective of the United States and its actions. That professor, Viccellio remembers, would usually be quickly replaced at the behest of the hyper-politically active student body.<sup>2</sup> There were even attempts by the student body to expel Viccellio from the University. Thanks to some open-minded faculty (and Viccellio's talents as a basketball player on the school's basketball team), these attempts failed.

Viccellio describes his Olmsted Scholar experience as illuminating. Not just in terms of showing him negatively others perceived the US and its actions in the world, but also in terms of his own convictions. Others did not believe what he had always considered as given - that the United States was a force for good in the world. Viccellio recalls,

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“Being there, as a young fighter pilot, just out of war, convinced of the US and the goodness of everything that we did and thought and stood for, to be thrust into a situation where everything I believed and thought my country stood was challenged on a daily basis for two years was really an eye opener.”<sup>3</sup>

What Viccellio learned from this as a young officer was that he had to understand why people believed what they did - he learned the importance of looking at things through others' eyes. Viccellio applied this skill regularly, almost as a habit, he says, as issues emerged, trying to view things as others saw them before forming his own judgements.

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<sup>2</sup> Viccellio, interview.

<sup>3</sup> Viccellio, interview.

As Commander of Air Education and Training Command (AETC), Viccellio applied this skill often. Viccellio was the first commander of AETC. As the new command stood up in 1992, it made significant changes to the training approach it had inherited from its predecessor, Air Training Command (ATC).<sup>4</sup> Under ATC, the traditional Air Force approach to training was to teach aviators only the very basic skills of flying. Pilots' follow-on units taught combat-related skills. Viccellio moved AETC to absorb this combat training, thus delivering more "combat ready" aircrew to their operational units. This shift in training was a big change, Viccellio explains, because it shifted manpower and resources for combat crew training from follow-on units to AETC. As Viccellio recounts, the fact that he had a propensity to see the situation as others saw it made him much more effective when he tried to explain the rationale for the training changes.<sup>5</sup> By gaining the trust of follow-on units, Viccellio convinced them that the aviators AETC produced would be trained to their satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

Later, at Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), Viccellio again applied his ability to see situations from others' perspectives to solve politically sensitive problems. While at AFMC, Viccellio was responsible for de-activating two air force maintenance depots – McClellen (outside of Sacramento, CA) and Kelly (near San Antonio, TX). Their closure impacted one hundred thousand jobs and affected the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars.<sup>7</sup> There were many constituencies – commercial interests and congressional representatives of districts with remaining depots – who wanted McClellen and Kelley's roles (and their funding) shifted to them.<sup>8</sup> Viccellio recalls that seemingly everyone wanted to discuss with him the "right solution." The fact that he had a propensity

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<sup>4</sup> Viccellio, interview.

<sup>5</sup> Viccellio, interview.

<sup>6</sup> Viccellio, interview.

<sup>7</sup> Viccellio, interview.

<sup>8</sup> Viccellio, interview.

to think about the situation as others did enabled him to explain the reasons behind his eventual decision more effectively. In other words, by understanding the perspectives of his audiences, he was better able to communicate.

Reflecting over the course of his Air Force career, Viccellio highlights that not once did he use his Spanish language skills or knowledge of Mexican culture. He was never assigned to SOUTHCOM or to an attaché position that would have leveraged his language or cultural expertise. Nevertheless, he did find himself in positions where his ability to see situations from different points of view, to build trust, and to communicate effectively helped him immensely. Many of Viccellio's positions, such as Assistant Air Force Liaison to the US Senate, Director of the Joint Staff, and as commander of two different Air Force Major Commands, required him to understand and collaborate with myriad stakeholders. One of the main reasons for his success in these positions, he says, was his ability to look at things through others' eyes. This, more than language or culture, is the primary way the Olmsted Scholar Program shaped him as a senior leader.

**Vice Admiral James Foggo, III (USN)**  
Olmsted Scholar Class of 1987, Strasbourg, France

*What makes ours the world's greatest and most effective navy is the fact that we act in concert with our NATO allies and partners. It is only in this way that we, and all like-minded allies and partners, maintain peace.*

- Vice Admiral James Foggo, III

“You’d better be careful if you choose to accept the Olmsted Scholar program. You can’t afford to go to language school for a year and then overseas for two years. Too much time away from an operational billet.” That is what then-Lieutenant Foggo’s navy detailer (assignment officer) told him. “Likewise, you probably won’t come back

to submarines as an Engineer in a department head job(which was my choice). And, if you don't get back to a nuclear billet within 36 months, you will need a waiver.”<sup>9</sup> Foggo had applied to some graduate school programs while on his most recent sea tour and had been accepted into Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. He was nearly complete with the program when he received news he had been accepted into the Olmsted Scholar Class of 1987. This triggered the phone call with his detailer. He would need to hustle to complete the program and return to operations within 36 months, but it was possible, provided he skip language school and just attack graduate school in a foreign country by brute force and total immersion. The opportunity to live abroad, learn a language, and immerse in a culture was too good to pass up. “I’ll take my chances,” he told his detailer, and Foggo’s Olmsted experience began.

Foggo attended the University of Strasbourg in France. The university, and especially its political science department, had an excellent reputation. Additionally, Strasbourg was home to many European institutions, such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The convergence of history, politics, and culture in Strasbourg provided Foggo with an opportunity to not only gain insight into French culture, but also broader insight into the politics and sentiment that would launch the European Union in 1993. His experience at university was nearly the opposite of Viccellio’s. French citizens, students, and faculty generally welcomed him. This goodwill, Foggo claims, was largely the product of French affinity for Americans - a 30-plus year dividend of the United States’ role in the liberation of France.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Foggo’s grandfather fought in World War I and his father fought in World War II. This family legacy, in conjunction with

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<sup>9</sup> Vice Admiral James Foggo, III, USN, (Director, Navy Staff) interview by the author, 5 April 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Foggo, interview.

Foggo's Olmsted experience, bonded him to the French people and culture.

Foggo recalls that his Olmsted experience in Strasbourg, like Viccellio's experience in Mexico City, broadened and illuminated his perspective in many ways. He witnessed first-hand the sense of openness and progress that the fall of the Berlin Wall inspired among his French colleagues. Foggo also forged valuable relationships that paid dividends decades later, while he commanded the US Navy's Sixth Fleet. He remembers with fondness his college friend Mario from the island nation of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Mario was Foggo's "battle buddy" at university. After Mario graduated from university, he worked in various capacities for the Mauritian government. Mario was in the cabinet of the prime minister of Mauritius when Foggo called, nearly three decades after their time at university, to ask for his help in supporting the port visit of the USS *Simpson*, a US Navy guided missile frigate, to Mauritius' capital of Port Louis. The *Simpson*'s visit was part of Exercise CUTLASS EXPRESS, a 12-nation anti-pirating exercise, in which Mauritius was participating.<sup>11</sup> In support of his "battle buddy," Mario arranged for the President of Mauritius to tour the *Simpson* with a hundred government officials and community leaders. There, the president made a speech thanking the US for its presence at Diego Garcia and for its help combating piracy and corruption in the region. The personal bonds Foggo forged in Strasbourg, such as his friendship with Mario, directly contributed to his ability to strengthen America's maritime partnerships as Commander of Sixth Fleet.<sup>12</sup>

Foggo also recalls a time when, as a Captain, he was asked to regularly receive visiting French military officials at the Pentagon. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, America's NATO allies vowed

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<sup>11</sup> US Navy Sixth Fleet, "Port Louis," Public Affairs, accessed 16 April 2017, <http://www.c6f.navy.mil/tags/port-louis>

<sup>12</sup> Foggo, interview

solidarity and support for the United States. Nearly half a year later, though, that solidarity began to fray, especially between the Bush Administration and the administration of French President Jacques Chirac. France's dissatisfaction with America's approach to Iraq stemmed from the belief that there had to be an emphasis on non-military tools to address the root causes of terrorism and, where the situation called for military force, that a broad coalition be built to pursue narrow military objectives.<sup>13</sup> By 2003, the Franco-American relationship had reached a nadir. Relations between the two countries had soured to the extent that some Americans even believed France wanted the United States to fail in Iraq. In an article for the New York Times, Thomas L. Friedman wrote, "It's time we Americans came to terms with something: France is not just our annoying ally. It is not just our jealous rival. France is becoming our enemy."<sup>14</sup> Friedman's comments, though extreme, convey a feeling of disdain that many Americans felt toward France at the time.

This sentiment existed within the White House too, and affected the US military's conduct towards French military officials. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Richard Myers, and the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint Staff (J5) were not pre-disposed to meet with French military officers until the French government's policy on Iraq changed.<sup>15</sup> So, at a much lower level, Foggo was often asked to receive visiting French military delegations, one of which included the French 3-star officer who was later assistant to the French President. While Foggo did not necessarily agree with the French position, he nevertheless understood the political reasons why France

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<sup>13</sup> Benedicte Suzan and Phillip Gordon, "France, the United States and the "War on Terrorism," The Brookings Institution, accessed 16 April 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/france-the-united-states-and-the-war-on-terrorism/>

<sup>14</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "Our War With France," *The New York Times*, 18 September 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/18/opinion/our-war-with-france.html>

<sup>15</sup> Foggo, interview.

had not provided the support the United States sought. Eventually, he thought, this too would pass with an eventual change of leadership in the Elysee, and he was right. Through it all, he maintained professional working relationships with his French colleagues. Those relationships, like his relationship with Mario, paid dividends when Foggo commanded Sixth Fleet.

At Sixth Fleet, Foggo and his counterpart in the Fifth Fleet, played a role in the agreement to send the *Charles de Gaulle* (CDG), France's nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, to cover a United States "carrier gap" in the Arabian Gulf.<sup>16</sup> After that tour, when the CDG was in dry dock for overhaul, the US again faced a carrier gap and again the French sent the CDG. In other naval activities, Foggo highlights, US navy vessels were placed under French tactical control while French vessels were placed under US operational control. For example, the US gave France command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150), a maritime security and anti-terrorism force operating in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.<sup>17</sup> The degree of cooperation and collaboration between US and French forces today bears little resemblance to the acrimonious Franco-American relationship of 2003. Today, Foggo explains, the French multiply America's combat capability and a lot of this happens because of relationships that were built years ago.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the language skills and cultural insight Foggo gained as an Olmsted Scholar, he also credits his ability to understand another side's perspective to his time in France. The French, he says, have a more gradual and philosophical approach to decision-making than Americans. They make a concerted effort to understand the opposing side's argument. In fact, Foggo says, this is part of the process for defending one's thesis at a French university – presenting not just one's

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<sup>16</sup> Foggo, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Foggo, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Foggo, interview.

own argument, but also the opposition's.<sup>19</sup> As current Director of the Navy Staff, Foggo keeps a symbol of this philosophy on his desk – a Native American talking stick. A talking stick was a tool used by Native Americans to, among other things, prevent war. When two conflicting parties met to explore their grievances, a talking stick was used to ensure everyone's point of view was heard. While Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen used a talking stick, given to him by noted author Dr. Steven Covey, in a similar way.<sup>20</sup> Two rules applied to the talking stick: First, one had the floor if one held the stick; second, one had to present not just one's own view, but the other side's view as well. This was often an eye-opening experience for people, because it exposed shortfalls in people's understanding of the causes of grievances.

Throughout Foggo's post-Olmsted naval career, he has leveraged the skills and insight he acquired as an Olmsted Scholar. Whether speaking French with America's partners in North Africa, enlisting the support of small island nations to promote maritime stability, or as Director of the Navy Staff, Foggo credits the Olmsted Scholar Program with shaping his approach to problem solving. This rests on his ability to understand others' perspectives. You do not solve problems, he says, sitting in a board room, across the table from others in uniform, arguing about words.<sup>21</sup> You solve problems, rather, by building relationships on mutual respect, by finding common ground with others, and having a dialogue about the way forward. When you ignore that, or walk away from opportunities to do that, or refuse invitations in the first place, you do not make progress.<sup>22</sup> These are lessons that have served him well and he learned them as a young Navy officer in Strasbourg as an Olmsted Scholar.

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<sup>19</sup> Foggo, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Foggo, Interview.

<sup>21</sup> Foggo, Interview.

<sup>22</sup> Foggo, interview.

**Lieutenant General Steven Shepro, USAF**  
Olmsted Scholar Class of 1993, Strasbourg, France

*With each passing year, the United States recognizes the need for more global engagement. The strength of the United States is its partnerships.*

*Lt Gen Steven Shepro, USAF*

As a young Air Force pilot, Captain Steven Shepro found himself in Strasbourg, France as an Olmsted Scholar in 1994. Having already completed operational assignments in Spain and the UK, he felt he understood Europe well. Shepro quickly realized, however, that these previous experiences were of an outsider looking in. His time in France would hereafter open to him the invaluable perspective of an insider looking out.<sup>23</sup>

In 1994, France commemorated the 50th anniversary of its liberation by the Allies during World War II. Each town and village enthusiastically celebrated its liberation anniversary, mirroring the eastward advance of allied forces across the country in 1944. America's Ambassador to France, upon learning of Shepro, enlisted him to officially represent the US at many of these celebrations, especially in Eastern France. Shepro was touched by the gratitude France still felt for its liberators. As an ad hoc ambassador, he learned first-hand what it meant to be an international Airman.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Lt Gen Steven Shepro (USAF, Deputy Chairman NATO Military Committee, Brussels, BE), interview by the author, 6 April 2017.

<sup>24</sup> In a March 2017 speech before the Air Warfare Symposium, General David Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, remarked on his role as "International Air Chief," a nod to the importance of America's allies and partners in confronting the challenges of the global security environment. The United States' allies and partners represent, in Goldfein's view, an "asymmetric strategic advantage" for America. Future conflict, he said, will be fought by coalitions; it will be multi-national and, as a result, Airmen had an obligation to ensure they and their systems were "coalition friendly." See General David Goldfein, chief of staff, US Air Force (address, Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL, 2 March 2017).

Shepro attended the University of Strasbourg, following the steps of several notable scholars, including Admiral Foggo. At university, he studied history and politics and wrote his graduate thesis on the future of NATO in the post-Cold War era.<sup>25</sup> Shepro also earned an internship at the EU Parliament, which gave him a first-hand look at the inner workings of the nascent EU. Following university, Shepro attended the Argentine Command and Staff College in Buenos Aires. From there, he worked as Chief of the International Fighter Program for the Secretary of the Air Force's International Affairs Staff (SAF-IA). Following his staff tour, Shepro held several command jobs, including squadron command in Wurzburg, Germany and Group Command at Pope Air Force Base.<sup>26</sup> He was a Vice Wing Commander at Balad Air Base in Iraq and, later, the commander of the 316th Wing at Andrews Air Force Base. Shepro then went on to serve as Director of Strategy, Policy and Plans (J5) in SOUTHCOM before becoming Commanding General of the NATO Air Training Command in Afghanistan. From Afghanistan, Shepro held positions on the Air Staff and Joint Staff before assuming his present role as Deputy Chairman of the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, Belgium.<sup>27</sup> It would not be unfair to say after assignments and leaderships roles in Spain, the UK, France, Argentina, Germany, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Belgium that Shepro has come to epitomize General Goldfein's vision of an international Airman.

What did Shepro take away from his experience as an Olmsted Scholar? How has it influenced his development as a senior leader? Like other Scholars, he acquired language skills that paid dividends in his post-Olmsted assignments. In his current position, he regularly speaks

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<sup>25</sup> Lt Gen Stephen Shepro (Deputy Chairman, NATO Military Committee, Brussels, Belgium), interview by the author, 6 April 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Shepro, interview.

French (NATO's other official language), and employs his other languages to build bridges that are so germane to the success of the Alliance.

International partners are still surprised to hear an American that is multi-lingual and culturally attuned. At his first meeting with the European Union Military Committee, an important partnership that NATO has prioritized, he was listening to the French military representative speak (in French), when the Chairman of the Committee, a Greek general, observed Shepro not using the translation earpieces. The Chairman told the Committee's Director to instruct Shepro on how to use the earpiece. The Director looked at Shepro and then responded to the Chairman, "Sir, I think General Shepro is good. I think he speaks French." The Chairman, incredulous, loudly retorted, "No! He's American. He doesn't speak French." Then, turning to Shepro, said, "General, put your earpiece on so you can understand the discussion." To which Shepro answered, "Ca va; je parle française (we're good -- I speak French)."<sup>28</sup>

Apart from the language skills he acquired as an Olmsted Scholar, Shepro is also aware of, and grateful for, the Olmsted Scholar Program cultivating his understanding that non-Americans think differently than Americans. Though this seems obvious, in Shepro's view, it is frequently overlooked in strategic thinking, especially regarding assumptions about how a potential adversary will react to specific actions. A country's "reputation for action" – how others expect the country to behave - is one of the most valuable assets it possesses.<sup>29</sup> If one assumes, however, that

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<sup>28</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>29</sup> See Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 125. In a discussion of the manipulation of risk, Schelling argues that if one side yields on a series of issues, when the matters at stake are not critical, it may be difficult to communicate to the other just when a vital issue has been reached. For example, Schelling writes, "it might be hard to persuade the Soviets, if the US yielded on Cuba and then on Puerto Rico, that it would go to war over KeyWest." One's reputation for action is, if nothing more, a communicative tool that conveys to others what they can expect it to do in certain situations. If, however, there is variance in how

an adversary would behave the way America would, for example, then the strategy will be flawed. It is important to know, Shepro emphasizes, “how your audience or host nation will interpret your actions and how it is likely to respond.”<sup>30</sup> In all aspects of strategy development, and in interactions with NATO allies, Shepro remains on guard against flawed assumptions, particularly those that expect an adversary, ally, or partner to respond as America would.

This broadened perspective, and its help in simplifying complex problems, was perhaps the most important way the Olmsted Scholar Program impacted Shepro’s development. We are not just living in a more complicated world, Shepro says, but in an increasingly complex world.<sup>31</sup> Problems today have a much greater potential to cascade and create other problems. Additionally, problems are increasingly interrelated. Today’s leaders, Shepro asserts, need to be able to “connect the dots” and understand how problems relate globally.<sup>32</sup> The strategies the US uses in one region, for example, may bring together nations whose interests align, but in another region, those same nations’ interests may diverge – even within Europe. A broad perspective is essential to this understanding.

Thankfully, Shepro recalls, he has held many positions that augmented the broad perspective he initially gained from the Olmsted Scholar program. Tours in Europe, South America, the Middle East, and Afghanistan reinforced for him the importance of being an International Airman. Moreover, his experiences highlighted the importance of America’s allies and partners as strategic assets. To execute security strategies that recognize allies and partners in this way, Shepro says, the

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others perceive a state’s reputation, or the criticality of a specific issue, then there the likelihood of miscalculation rises.

<sup>30</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>31</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Shepro, interview.

US needs leaders that can build and guide coalitions.<sup>33</sup>..The Air Force has voiced awareness of the need to build International Airmen with the same attention it gives to other areas of leadership and expertise. Even so, Shepro points out, there are scant training requirements toward building global-scale leaders in charge of diverse, multi-national coalitions. For example, he says, in the 15-plus years since the USAF set a goal of having 10% of its officer corps at least bilingual, it is still well short of that mark.<sup>34</sup>

For all the ways our senior military leaders are prepared, Shepro points out, they do not receive the kind of training that forces them to perceive, appreciate, and incorporate others' points of view in the way the Olmsted Scholar Program does through complete cultural immersion. While America's military leaders get a lot of good training and a lot more breadth today than they received in the past, they still do not receive enough training that helps them apply leadership on a global scale in charge of diverse, multi-national coalitions.<sup>35</sup>

Even in the Information Age, with all the ways people are connecting globally and forging their identities, there is no substitute for person-to-person contact. Social media, Shepro says, enables a great deal, but it cannot replace human interaction as a method to understand others.<sup>36</sup> Globalization has supposedly made national borders less relevant, but in Shepro's view, borders are getting stronger once again with the rise of nationalism, especially in Europe. The cohesion of NATO, its all-important "center of gravity," is under pressure from increasingly disparate interests and perspectives within Europe itself.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the relevance of the Olmsted Scholar Program may be coming into a central role. We, as a country, are now more aware of our

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<sup>33</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>35</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>36</sup> Shepro, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Shepro, interview.

interdependence. For Shepro, though, this was a realization he has held since he was a young officer, studying politics on the banks of the Rhine in Strasbourg.

**Major General Timothy Fay, USAF**  
Olmsted Scholar Class of 1997, Buenos Aires, Argentina

*The ability to think critically as an independent broker in an environment of extreme uncertainty has universal utility. If anything characterizes the nature of our military operations, it is that they must succeed in the face of uncertainty.*

*Major General Timothy Fay, USAF  
Vice Commander, US Air Forces Europe and Air Forces Africa*

Major General Timothy Fay is currently the Vice Commander of US Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces in Africa. A B-52 *Superfortress* pilot by training, Fay flew combat missions in Operation DESERT STORM. He has commanded at the squadron, group and wing levels in the United States and Europe. Additionally, Fay served as director of several staff directorates, including the Innovation Group at STRATCOM, Strategic Communications for US Forces in Baghdad, Iraq (USF-I J9) and Director of Operations, Strategic Deterrence, and Nuclear Integration at US Air Forces Europe. From ensuring the credibility of America's nuclear deterrent to reassuring America's allies of its resolve, the ability to analyze situations dispassionately and to question assumptions has been invaluable throughout his career. Fay first learned these skills going through the US Air Force's Weapons Instructor Course. As an Olmsted Scholar thrust into Buenos Aires without any support network, Fay learned what it meant to be effective in an environment of uncertainty. He learned the necessity of seeing things from multiple perspectives and he has used these skills throughout his career.

The story of Fay's Olmsted Scholar experience begins the day before his graduation from Weapons School, 72 hours before he was

scheduled to begin language training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterrey, California. Fay had applied for the Olmsted Scholar Program well before he applied to Weapons School. Before Fay had applied to Weapons School, though, he informed the School's leadership that he had applied for the Olmsted Scholar program.<sup>38</sup> Fay knew that the Olmsted Scholar selection results would not be released for some time. If selected as an Olmsted Scholar, Fay also knew he would not be able to complete a tour as a unit Weapons Officer immediately following WIC. If the Weapons School did not want him to apply for WIC because he would be unable to complete his "payback" tour if selected for Olmsted, he completely understood. Somewhat amused at Fay's forthrightness, the B-52 Weapons School Detachment Commander laughed and said, "Captain Fay, there's no way you'll get that Olmsted Scholarship, so go ahead and apply to WIC."<sup>39</sup>

Several months before his graduation from Weapons School, Fay was informed he had been selected as an Olmsted Scholar and that he would attend university in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Based on the university's academic calendar, he would need to begin language training immediately after graduation from Weapons School. The day before graduation, the Weapons School Commandant tried to turn off Fay's selection as an Olmsted Scholar.<sup>40</sup> The Commandant reasoned that Fay's time was better spent in a unit teaching weapons and tactics than in Buenos Aires.

It was not the path, however, that others desired for him. Senior officers interceded to stop the Commandant's efforts and ensure Fay took part in the Olmsted Scholar Program.<sup>41</sup> As Fay recalls, their message to the Commandant was that the Air Force needed Fay to do a tour as an

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<sup>38</sup> Major General Timothy Fay, USAF (Vice Commander, US Air Forces in Europe), interview by the author, 7 April 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>41</sup> Fay, interview.

Olmsted Scholar.<sup>42</sup> In Fay's, view, senior leaders considered his participation in the Olmsted Scholar Program to be more important than post-Weapons School payback tour. Furthermore, they conveyed, Fay informed the Weapons School at the outset he had applied for the Olmsted Scholar Program and that this situation was a possibility.

The intervention of senior AF leaders to ensure Fay's participation in the Olmsted Scholar Program exemplifies Rosen's ideas about peacetime military innovation. Rosen argues that peacetime military innovation depends on the formulation of a new "theory of victory."<sup>43</sup> By protecting and promoting officers who enable the new theory of victory, the theory promulgates, albeit gradually, throughout the organization. In other words, the intervention of senior AF leaders to send Fay on his Olmsted Scholar tour may have indicated the rise of a new "theory of victory" – one that emphasized LREC skills and seeing situations as others did.

In terms of his development as a senior leader, Fay ranks the Olmsted Scholar Program co-equally with Weapons School. His experience in Buenos Aires broadened his perspective on Argentina, the region, and the United States. In the classroom, like General Viccellio's experience in Mexico City, Fay encountered opinions and perspectives that differed greatly from his own. On the first day of class, for example, one of his instructors gave a lesson that categorized the dropping of the atomic bomb as a war crime.<sup>44</sup> For Fay, and many Americans, this was shocking because he considered the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as militarily justified. Many Japanese and, evidently, some Argentines, however, considered the bombings as war crimes. Conflicting views on what the atomic bombings represent persist today, as President Obama's 2016 visit to Hiroshima demonstrated.

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<sup>42</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Rosen, *Winning*, 21.

<sup>44</sup> Fay, interview.

Fay also remembers that his perspective as a US Airman often ran counter to those of his Argentine contemporaries. Fay flew combat missions in Operation DESERT STORM. As a result, he was deeply aware of the US-led coalition's efforts to reduce collateral damage, build cohesion within the coalition, and ensure its compliance with international law.<sup>45</sup> He tried to convince his fellow students that, above all, American servicemen and women desire to be professional and to embody our national values. These notions, Fay reflected, were not always communicated in the mainstream media narrative of America's press, let alone Argentina's. As his peers gradually came to know him, they often commented, "you're not what I thought the US military would be like."<sup>46</sup> At a personal level, Fay says, his time at university allowed him to drive off some prejudices and misperceptions.

The Olmsted Scholar experience highlighted for Fay the importance of recognizing that another's perspective may be different from one's own. This is especially important for effective communication, which requires understanding one's audience. During his time at university, as a "foreigner" dealing with a skeptical audience, he learned that his opinions and arguments needed to be factual, unemotional, and anticipatory of his audience's likely reactions.<sup>47</sup> He grew as a critical thinker and this was largely due to his experience in Buenos Aires. In his current role, Fay continues to build his understanding of the perspective of America's allies, partners, and potential adversaries. This is especially important in the formulation of strategy, he notes, because if others perceive our actions in a way we did not intend, then they may react in a way we did not anticipate.<sup>48</sup> Understanding different perspectives, thinking critically, and questioning assumptions are

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<sup>45</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>46</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Fay, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Fay, interview.

essential skills for senior officers. More fundamentally, Fay suggests, senior leaders need to be able to operate effectively with a broad array of stakeholders in environment of uncertainty. No training fully prepares senior leaders for the jobs they do, he says, but he has drawn on what he learned as an Olmsted Scholar in every assignment he has had since. It was, simply, the most effective educational experience he had in his life.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Fay, interview.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Conclusion**

*In the end, the root of man's security does not lie in his weaponry. It lies in his mind.*

Robert McNamara

### **Findings**

This Thesis asked, “does the Olmsted Scholar Program have strategic value?” To answer this question, the Thesis posed three sub-questions: 1) What is the Olmsted Scholar Program and why is it relevant; 2) Do the military services recognize Olmsted Scholars as valuable; and 3) How has the program impacted the development of senior US military leaders? Let us review each, in turn.

1. What is the Olmsted Scholar Program and why is it relevant?

Whether the Olmsted Scholar Program is strategically relevant depends mostly on the present strategic situation. Conflict in the twenty-first century, some argue, is different from the traditional state-on-state conflict that characterized most of the twentieth century. Simpson points out that in the twenty-first century, military force by itself is necessary but insufficient to generate the political outcomes one seeks because outcomes tend to be defined by audiences other than one’s enemy. Kaldor asserts that in today’s “new wars,” the political context tends to fragment along conceptions of identity, be they ethnic, religious, or linguistic in nature. Whereas Kaldor attributes violence to cleavages along political lines based on identity, Kalyvas, on the other hand, posits that violence, which can stem from purely personal interests, can be naturalized into new and enduring identities. Culture, through its influence on starting points (one’s self-image), also influences

identity. Therefore, to understand and effectively influence people, especially through the application of force, one must understand and incorporate culture into strategy.

In 1959, believing the US needed a cadre of specially trained warrior-statesmen to help manage America's growing role in the world, Major General George Olmsted founded the Olmsted Scholar Program. Through cultural immersion, Olmsted Scholars gain a level of language, regional, and cultural expertise afforded few other military officers. By living completely immersed in another country and by travelling extensively, Scholars gain crucial analytical skills and a broadened perspective. In view of the nature of 21st-century conflict and the United States' imperative to undergird the global, rules-based order from which it benefits, the strategic relevance of the Olmsted Scholar Program and Olmsted Scholars has never been greater.

2) Do the military services recognize the Olmsted Scholar Program as valuable?

Since the publishing of the 2005 *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap*, the DoD has systematically institutionalized the importance of language, regional expertise, and cultural skills. The DoD's emphasis on LREC is, in some respects, emblematic of the way military organizations innovate. Stephen Rosen contends that in military organizations, innovation results from an ideological struggle – one in which a new “theory of victory” rises. The way the new theory of victory promulgates throughout the military is through the promotion of officers who subscribe to or exemplify the new theory. By translating the new theory of victory into everyday tasks and critical missions, a new criteria forms against which the military measures the effectiveness of its officers. Rosen offers, as an example, the process by which the US Navy gradually accepted and adopted carrier-based aviation

If Rosen's conception of military organizational change is correct, then one would expect Olmsted Scholars to promote competitively against their non-Olmsted peers because, by nature of their language and cultural skills, they better exemplify the new theory of victory. There are obvious pitfalls, though, in examining promotion data, not least of which is the fact it is nearly impossible to attribute one's selection for promotion to only one element. Numerous factors contribute to a promotion board's assessment of an officer's leadership potential. Furthermore, promotion data is difficult to obtain. What little could be obtained by the author, however, indicates there appears to be within the Air Force a correlation between one's early selection for promotion, or selection to general/flag rank with one's status as an Olmsted Scholar. Thus, it appears the Air Force values Olmsted Scholars and, perhaps to some degree, a new LREC-based vision of victory also.

### 3. How has the Olmsted Scholar Program impacted the development of senior US military leaders?

Interviews with senior US military leaders revealed several ways in which the Olmsted Scholar Program impacted their development. First, interviewees noted that by nature of their cultural immersion, they acquired a broader perspective through the Olmsted Scholar Program. Second, some interviewees highlighted the ways their cognition had changed because of their immersive experiences abroad. Interviewees, for example, noted they had become better critical thinkers while participating in the Olmsted Scholar Program. Others noted they were better able to uncover hidden, and often flawed, assumptions in the development and execution of strategy. The combination of a broadened perspective and greater cognitive skills enabled all interviewees, in their view, to better craft and execute strategy.

Those interviewees who spoke French indicated they have used and continue to use their foreign language skills in their post-Olmsted careers on a regular basis. They credit their ability to speak another language with enabling them to better accomplish certain aspects of their missions. This is especially the case when those tasks and responsibilities require interaction with French-speaking partners. All interviewees though, regardless of the degree to which they have used their language skills in an official capacity, expressed their high valuation of the ability to speak another language, which they acquired through the Olmsted Scholar Program.

### **Implications**

For the strategist, information is critical. Both Sun Tzu and Clausewitz recognized that familiarity with one's foe – how that foe perceived information, processed it, and reacted - must be central to strategy. Strategists must ask themselves not just, “*how should we proceed?*” They must also ask, “*how do others expect us to proceed?*” Possessing and using this multi-faceted perspective is vitally important for the strategist.

People process information through the prism of their cultures. For our servicemen and women, there is an imperative not just to understand different cultures, but to perceive decisions and actions from as many different cultural perspectives as possible. If we aim to compel, coerce, or defeat our adversaries and at the same time support, strengthen and reassure our partners, then America’s military leaders must understand culture. The Olmsted Scholar Program produces officers who possess just such an understanding.

Evidence suggests that Olmsted Scholars, as a cadre of warrior-statesmen, have strategic value for the DoD. The Air Force demonstrates it values Scholars through above average promotion rates. The DoD

financially compensates its LREC-enabled personnel more than its personnel who lack LREC skills. Those Scholars who have reached Flag/General officer rank credit their success in part to their ability to speak a foreign language and the cognitive abilities they acquired through cultural immersion. For the Department of Defense and for the officers that lead it, it is clear the Olmsted Scholar Program has strategic value.

There is, however, a tension between the Olmsted Foundation and some of the military services regarding the Olmsted Scholar Program. The Foundation sees the Olmsted Scholar Program as a leadership development program. One that uniquely prepares officers to operate effectively in an uncertain and complex global environment. In the Foundation's view, some of the services perceive the Olmsted Scholar Program as simply another source of Foreign Affairs Officers. Perhaps this tension between the Foundation and the military Services will never be resolved.

On the other hand, perhaps the tension derives from, in a sense, a somewhat narrowed perspective. The tension arises mainly from how Scholars are utilized in their post-Olmsted careers. The Air Force, for example, tends to view its officers' Olmsted experience as an enabling experience, resulting in better-than-average promotion rates. For the Marine Corps, on the other hand, Scholars are used primarily as FAOs and their low promotion rates to O-6 rank and above may indicate the Corps does not value LREC skills, in general, or Scholars specifically. Does this mean the Marine Corps has not subscribed to what Rosen would call a new, LREC-centric theory of victory? Perhaps. Perhaps not.

What is certain, though, is that America's leaders must incorporate foreign cultures and perspectives into the development of strategy. People's sense of identity plays a central role in the animation and interpretation of violence. Culture strongly influences identity, as LeBaron demonstrates. If we seek to influence how others interpret and

react to America's use (or threat) of violence, then we must understand all that comprises others' cultures too, such as their starting points and worldviews.

The real value of Olmsted Scholars rests upon their ability to advance America's strategy to achieve its objectives. Scholars who have become Flag/General officers view their Olmsted Scholar experience as an asset because it has enabled them to do just this. For over fifty years, Olmsted Scholars have used their LREC skills and broad perspectives in service of the United States. They utilize these skills in the formulation and execution of strategy. In the contemporary conflict environment, one characterized by fractured identity politics and global audiences, these skills are needed now more than ever. By bringing culture to strategy, Olmsted Scholars help ensure the United States' continuing advantage in an age of complexity and uncertainty. In this way, by exchanging culture for violence, Scholars demonstrate their strategic value.

## APPENDIX A

### US Military Career Fields Eligible for the Olmsted Scholar Program

US ARMY	
Code	Specialty
11	Infantry
12	Combat Engineer
13	Field Artillery
14	Air Defense Artillery
15	Aviation
18	Special Forces
19	Armor
25	Signal
29	Electronic Warfare
30	Information Operations
31	Military Police
34	Strategic Intelligence
35	Military Intelligence
37	Psychological Operations
38	Civil Affairs
40	Space Operations
74	Chemical
90	Logistics

US NAVY	
Code	Specialty
111X	Surface Warfare
112X	Submarine Warfare
113X	Special Warfare (SEAL)
114X	Special Operations (EOD, Diving, Salvage)
131X	Pilot
132X	Naval Flight Officer
181X	Information Warfare

182X	Information Professional
183X	Intelligence
310X	Supply Corps

US Air Force	
Code	Specialty
11	Pilot
12	Navigator
13	Space, Missile, Command & Control
14	Intelligence
17	Cyberspace Operations
18	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Pilot
21	Logistics
31	Security Forces
32	Civil Engineering
38	Force Support
61	Scientific Research/Development
62	Developmental Engineer
63	Acquisition

US Marine Corps	
Code	Specialty
02	Intelligence/Counterintelligence
03	Infantry
04	Logistics/Embarkation
05	Air Ground Task Force Plans/Ops
06	Communications/Network Ops & Systems
08	Field Artillery
13	Combat Engineer
18	Tank/Assault Amphibious Vehicle

26	Signals Intelligence/Ground Electronic Warfare
30	Supply Administration/Operations
58	Military Police
75	Pilot/Naval Flight Officer



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